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ABSTRACT

These six issues of the periodical offer teachers and tutors practical ideas for teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) to adults. The publications include such teaching activities as multilevel crossword puzzles, multilevel dictation, a grammar grab-bag, role play games, an ESL board game, and a newspaper search activity. They also offer queries and comments from the readers as well as hints and tips in such areas as teaching intonation, using puzzles, playing guessing games, and using pictures. Tips from the field focus on planning lessons, creating student reports on endangered species, dealing with bank accounts, and achieving personal goals via the Olympic spirit. Two issues include mini-grant reports that describe a student-made home safety exhibit and a student-written tour guidebook of London, Kentucky. (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education.) (SM)

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Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

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Spring forward

Traditionally, spring is the time for school programs to wind to a close, but many of our readers work in programs that continue through the summer. Some may be teaching in schools that have a summer session for ESL. Some may be tutoring in library or literacy programs that know no seasons. This is one more way in which our field differs from the mainstream, and it has its pros and cons.

It's certainly great for your students to continue with their lessons, as the more instruction they can get, the better. For the instructor it can be exhausting, both mentally and physically, not to have a break. We hope that the activities in this issue will give you some help, ideas and inspiration that will energize your lessons!

We also hope that, if you are getting a chance to rest and recover, you'll take some time to share your thoughts, tips and teaching ideas with *Hands-on English*. As you'll see on our letters page in this issue, our readers have lots of questions! Networking with fellow HOE subscribers provides an invaluable resource. We look forward to hearing from you!

In this issue

We are tickled to bring you Magali Duignan's "Spy interviews" activity on page 4. We think your students will enjoy the role-playing while practicing some useful interview skills (not just grammar!) at the same time.

Spring is graduation season, and if your students are not yet graduating from a program themselves, they may have children or friends who are. We've provided a simple story on page 6, "A high school graduation"

for your students to read and discuss, along with a multi-level dictation exercise. Such ceremonies and recognition are important for many reasons; for the program, the students, and for their families.

Spring includes many other important events besides graduation, and you'll find these mentioned in our "Multi-level crossword puzzle" about spring on pages 8 and 9.

If your students are interested in environmental issues, you may be inspired by Beth Rodacker-Borgens' "Endangered species project," in which her students each reported on an animal of their choice. This activity relates not only to current global events and international policies, but also gives students a chance to share something wonderful about their home countries.

Our correspondence with Abbie Tom continues on page 12 of this issue, as she sends a third letter to new teachers, this time with good suggestions for lesson planning. We think this will provide you with many ideas for varying and enriching your lessons.

Do you like the idea of getting your students to do independent work, even at the beginning stage? Don't miss our new list of homework ideas on page 14!

Finally, don't forget to check our website for the occasional current events activity which we offer as "extra" teaching material! Coming soon—"An expensive trip," a story about the American millionaire who is the first tourist on the international space station. And the price is right—this material is free for you to use or adapt as you like.

Happy teaching! —the Editor. ✍

Hands-on English

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May/June 2001

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About the publication

We're starting our second decade! *Hands-on English* has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

The articles and ideas in HOE come from experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have a lesson or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?

Our subscribers work with ESL students in a wide range of programs, including: Refugee programs, Literacy programs, Community colleges, Colleges and universities, Correctional facilities, Resource centers, **Adult Education programs**, Volunteer tutoring, Intensive ESL programs, Teacher training programs, Religious organizations, Worker's unions, Community Education programs, Secondary schools, Workplace education, Language institutes, Libraries . . . and more!

What do our readers have in common? They are dedicated, they are working under sometimes difficult conditions, and they are looking for practical, adult materials that will help their students learn English.

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Only three percent of our income comes from advertising. Our editorial decisions are independent. ➡



H.O.E. online

Hands-on English is now on the Web! You can find us at:
www.handsonenglish.com

You'll find **current events activities** ready to use, a detailed index of all our back issues, updates on resources and more.
See you there!

Your editor, Anna Silliman, is never too busy to talk with a subscriber!

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Letters

...& cards,
emails,
calls,
rumors,
etc.

Online tax activity

Editor's note: We've heard from a lot of people about the current events activity on our website called "Where does your tax money go?" Here's one response:

"Thank you for providing such a simple, useful lesson. My Family Literacy class, (which includes ABE/GED and ESL students) worked through it yesterday. I'd like to comment that while I've always appreciated *Hands-on English* for ESL learners, I never before used it with such a diverse class. I think the reason it fit so well with this particular class is that we usually do whole and small group work around current events issues (usually newspaper), math and graphs, and family issues. Many learners are currently focused on Social Studies, too. This lesson covered them all in language simple enough for everyone to tackle.

"I think we need more, more, more materials like this for low level ESL and ABE learners. Having such lessons on the web in this format is an added bonus."

Thanks again,

—Lora Zangari, Lancaster, PA

Suggestions for jail class?

"HELP! Suggestions needed! I teach a multi-level 'beginners' class at one of our county jails. The 20-25 students are all Hispanic men. All are more or less literate in Spanish, but have varied oral & reading skills in English. All have a VERY short attention span! The only activity I've found that holds them for longer than 5 minutes are word searches or movies (some videos). The jail provides no teaching materials, only 1/2 size pencils (think mini-golf), erasers & a copier. Of course, I'm very limited in what I can take into the facility.

"The survival skills lessons I use in my 'regular' beginner classes are not relevant to the inmates; they aren't going shopping, calling 9-1-1, calling the child's school, making a doctor's appointment, etc. I've used *Very Easy True Stories* with some success, but the stories are too easy for about half the class. I try to use small group activities, but they need constant help with activities & to stay on task.

Any ideas from you and/or our great colleagues would be GREATLY appreciated!

—Dottie Shattuck, Charlotte, NC

Role plays?

"I teach a Conversation class comprised of Hispanic, Vietnamese and other adult ESL students ranging from high beginner to high intermediate. It is a challenge.

"I have noticed students enjoy role-playing and am searching for lesson planning material with skits and short role plays. Any suggestions? Thank you."

—Beverly (via email)

Editor's note: Take a look at Magali Duignan's 'Spy interviews' on pages 4 and 5 of this issue! We'd love to hear what other role-playing activities our readers recommend.

Senior partners

We had a phone call from ESL instructor Jane Greaser in Laramie, Wyoming, who is setting up a conversation program for her FSL students with a local retirement home. About 30 of her students will be matched with 30 senior citizens for conversation practice. Jane is wondering if anyone can suggest resources or give some tips about structuring this program? If you have ideas or experiences to share please contact her at agrease@aol.com or write to her care of LCCC ESL Program, Laramie Plains Civic Center, 710 E Garfield St, Laramie, WY 72070. Thank you!

Thoughtful response

"I especially like activities such as 'Dear B.A. Knowitall' [advice-column exercise in the March/April 2001 issue]. Any activity that requires the student to think, and then respond, is great."

—Larry Roazen, Brookline, MA

Teacher tried & tested

"HOE continues to be a great help in class. One of the best things is that ideas come from people who are actually teaching ESL!"

—Sr. Maisie Lufkin, New York, NY

Editor's note: So, keep those great ideas coming, folks! They are appreciated. ➡

Grammar grab-bag: Spy interviews

"Can you drive a speedboat?"

We received this wonderful interview/grammar activity from Magali Duignan, who refers to it as a "James Bond" exercise. The students have the opportunity to practice *can* and *can't* in an interview format.

In this activity, FBI agents are looking for qualified spies for specific missions. They interview several applicants until they find the perfect match. Magali calls this "Very Guided Role-Playing" because the students each get a role card that tells them exactly what skills they are looking for (or in the case of the applicants, exactly what skills they have).

Preparation

The students will work in rotating pairs for this activity. If there is an odd number of students, the instructor can participate to make up a pair. Half of the students receive one of the role cards for the FBI agent who is looking to hire a spy. The other half of the students receive an applicant card that tells them what skills they have so that they can apply for these jobs.

Notice that the role cards on the next page are in matched pairs. For each job opening, there is someone with exactly the right skills. You can select one set of role cards for each pair of students. For example, if you have 20 students, select the first 10 sets of role cards. Separate the cards into "Agent" and "Applicant" piles and shuffle them. Then distribute one card to each student.

How to do it

Once the students have been assigned their roles and have received their cards, they will no doubt have questions about some of the vocabulary. We suggest you help students individually with the vocabulary and pronunciation they need for their roles. Students will later "discover" the meaning of much of the other vocabulary as they work together. For example, "Can you drive a speedboat?" "I'm not sure—what is it?"

Next, introduce the activity by explaining to the agents: "You are an important FBI agent in a secret mission. Your task is to find a spy who can do all of the activities listed

on your card. Interview some people until you find the perfect spy for the job."

And to the aspiring spies you can say: "You are interested in working as a spy. You have many skills and they are listed on your card. To apply for a spy job, you will talk to some FBI agents until you find the perfect job for you."

If necessary you can model one interview with a student for the whole class, so that everyone understands what to do. Then let the students begin their interviews—the class will be noisy!

Level

This activity will work for any level of student, from beginner through advanced, and will also work in a multi-level class. For beginners it may seem that the vocabulary is too advanced, but remember they only have to learn the 3 or 4 items on their own role card in order to participate.

Advanced students might enjoy writing some of their own cards for a repeat of this activity.

Why it works

This is a useful grammar practice activity that is light-hearted and fun but adult in content at the same time. That is, most students will see the humor in it; yet adopting a competent role (for example of a brave spy or a highly paid professional), even in play, can have a positive effect on students' confidence level and ability to speak up.

In addition, of course, there are also real-life international current events issues about spying that students may be interested in reading about or discussing.

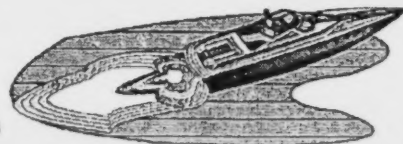
Follow up

As a simple follow-up exercise and grammar check, Magali suggests you give the students 10 short statements in writing, such as "I can speak Spanish" and "I can use computers." The students read these and decide whether they are true or false. Then, they respond in writing to each one. (i.e., "I can't speak Spanish.") You can also do this final check orally in class. ➡

Contributed by
Magali Duignan, ESL
Instructor at Augusta
State University in Au-
gusta, Georgia.

Editor's note: We apologize for the small print on the following page but we wanted to include all of Magali's material! Try enlarging these cards on your copier to make them easier for your students to read.

"Can you drive
a speedboat?"



Grammar grab-bag, cont'd. . .

1	Agent: There is a dangerous mission and you want a spy who can drive a motorboat, type, use a rifle, and speak Finnish.	Applicant: You can drive a motorboat, type, use a rifle, and speak Finnish.
2	Agent: There is a dangerous mission and you want a spy who can use a rifle, speak Finnish, drive a motor boat, and fly an airplane.	Applicant: You can use a rifle, speak Finnish, drive a motor boat, and fly an airplane.
3	Agent: There is a dangerous mission and you want a spy who can drive a car at 120 m.p.h., use a rifle, send messages in Morse Code, and pick locks.	Applicant: You can drive a car at 120 M.P.H., use a rifle, send messages in Morse code, and pick locks.
4	Agent: There is a dangerous mission and you want a spy who can ski, drive a speedboat, speak Chinese, and use a radio transmitter.	Applicant: You can ski, drive a speedboat, speak Chinese, and use a radio transmitter.
5	Agent: There is a dangerous mission and you want a spy who can ride a horse, speak Chinese, drive a car at 120 M.P.H. and ski.	Applicant: You can ride a horse, speak Chinese, drive a car at 120 M.P.H. and ski.
6	Agent: There is a dangerous mission and you want a spy who can use a machine gun, swim, and use a radio transmitter.	Applicant: You can use a machine gun, swim, and use a radio transmitter.
7	Agent: There is a dangerous mission and you want a spy who can speak Chinese, swim, ride a horse, and send messages in Morse Code.	Applicant: You can speak Chinese, swim, ride a horse, and send messages in Morse code.
8	Agent: There is a dangerous mission and you want a spy who can speak Russian, ride a horse, send messages in Morse Code, and fly a helicopter.	Applicant: You can speak Russian, ride a horse, send messages in Morse code, and fly a helicopter.
9	Agent: There is a dangerous mission and you want a spy who can ski, drive a motorboat, speak Finnish, and use a rifle.	Applicant: You can ski, drive a motorboat, speak Finnish, and use a rifle.
10	Agent: There is a dangerous mission and you want a spy who can speak Russian, skate, ski, and ride a horse.	Applicant: You can speak Russian, skate, ski, and ride a horse.
11	Agent: There is a dangerous mission and you want a spy who can ride a horse, speak Chinese, type, and speak Russian.	Applicant: You can ride a horse, speak Chinese, type, and speak Russian.
12	Agent: There is a dangerous mission, and you want a spy who can send messages in Morse Code, use a radio transmitter, use a gun and pick locks.	Applicant: You can send messages in Morse code, use a radio transmitter, use a gun, and pick locks.
13	Agent: There is a dangerous mission, and you want a spy who can ride a horse, fly a helicopter, drive a speed boat, and drive a car at 120 m.p.h.	Applicant: You can ride a horse, fly a helicopter, drive a speedboat, and drive a car at 120 m.p.h.
14	Agent: There is a dangerous mission, and you want a spy who can swim, speak Russian, ride a horse, and drive a car at 120 m.p.h.	Applicant: You can swim, speak Russian, ride a horse, and drive a car at 120 m.p.h.
15	Agent: There is a dangerous mission, and you want a spy who can speak Chinese, skate, pick locks, and fly a helicopter.	Applicant: You can speak Chinese, skate, pick locks, and fly a helicopter.
16	Agent: There is a dangerous mission, and you want a spy who can skate, use a gun, ride a horse, and drive a speedboat.	Applicant: You can skate, use a gun, ride a horse, and drive a speedboat.
17	Agent: There is a dangerous mission, and you want a spy who can speak Chinese, skate, drive a motorboat, and ride a horse.	Applicant: You can speak Chinese, skate, drive a motorboat, and ride a horse.
18	Agent: There is a dangerous mission, and you want a spy who can speak Russian, swim, use a radio transmitter, and speak Finnish.	Applicant: You can speak Russian, swim, use a radio transmitter, and speak Finnish.
19	Agent: There is a dangerous mission, and you want a spy who can send messages in Morse Code, ride a horse, swim, and speak Chinese.	Applicant: You can send messages in Morse code, ride a horse, swim, and speak Chinese.

Multi-level dictation: A high school graduation

Teachers keep telling us that our multi-level dictations are popular—we hope your students enjoy this one!

Preparation

Make photocopies of the worksheets on the opposite page. If you cut these apart and enlarge each one on your copier first, it will be easier for the students to write on them. Be sure to bring extra copies of each level, because students will likely want to try the exercise more than once, at different levels.

Read and discuss first

The most effective kind of dictation is one in which the students are very familiar with the text they are writing. So, you can decide whether to hand this story out and read it together with them, or to discuss the topic and read the story aloud to them before they see the text. In any case, they should be very comfortable with the ideas and the vocabulary before starting the dictation.

Dictation

Have the students choose which level to try (Level A is the easiest). Advanced students can try writing on a blank sheet of

paper. The first time you read the text, have the students read along on their worksheet, but not write anything. This will help them get a sense of how much writing they need to do. Then read each sentence at a natural speed, pausing between sentences to let students write. You can repeat the text as many times as the students wish.

When they are ready to check their answers have the students work together in pairs. Next, ask if any students wish to try again. Often students who succeed at a lower level want to try again at a higher level.

Why it works

This exercise is a listening puzzle that can be made just challenging enough not to frustrate the student, but difficult enough to learn from. A student could start with Level A, and succeed at all three levels, if enough time is spent correcting each level.

Variation

How about having the students give the dictation? They can work in pairs, with one student reading and the other writing. ➔

For literacy-level students, you can supply them with a word list so that they can succeed at Level A. Have them choose the correct word and copy it into the space.

12. 18
happy
son, parents, friends
class, students
principal
walk, listen
home, school
year

A high school graduation

Cheryl is very busy this week. Her son Ben is in 12th grade. He is 18 years old. He is almost finished with high school.

Next Saturday, Ben's class will have a graduation ceremony. The students have to wear nice clothes. They will also wear special caps and gowns. The students will listen to some speeches. Then each student will walk up to the front of the room. They will shake hands with the principal and get a diploma.

After the graduation ceremony Ben will go home. His parents are having a party for him. They will invite many friends. Everyone is happy that he has finished high school. Next year, he plans to go to college.

Discussion

1. Why is Cheryl busy? What is she doing to prepare for next Saturday?
2. Ben's parents are proud of him. Can you explain why?
3. Tell about a ceremony that you went to. What happened?



This is the full text for reading and dictation. It is 15 sentences (117 words).

Vocabulary needed:

wear, shake hands, invite, finish, plan
high school, graduation, ceremony, caps & gowns, principal, college.



Graduation—Level A

Cheryl is very busy this week. Her _____ Ben is in _____th grade. He is _____ years old. He is almost finished with high _____.

Next Saturday, Ben's _____ will have a graduation ceremony. The _____ have to wear nice clothes. They will also wear special caps and gowns. The students will _____ to some speeches. Then each student will _____ up to the front of the room. They will shake hands with the _____ and get a diploma.

After the graduation ceremony Ben will go _____. His _____ are having a party for him. They will invite many _____. Everyone is _____ that he has finished high school. Next _____, he plans to go to college.

Graduation—Level B

Cheryl is very busy _____. Her son Ben is in _____. He is _____. He is almost finished with _____.

_____, Ben's class will _____ graduation ceremony. _____ have to wear nice clothes. They will _____ wear special caps _____ gowns. The students _____ to some speeches. Then each student will walk up _____ of the room. They will shake _____ principal and _____ diploma.

_____ graduation ceremony Ben _____. His parents _____ for him. They will _____ friends. _____ that he has finished _____. Next year, he plans to _____.

Graduation—Level C

Cheryl _____ this week. _____ Ben is in 12th grade. _____ 18 _____. He is _____ high school.

Next Saturday, Ben's class _____ ceremony. The students _____ nice _____. They _____ special caps and gowns. The students _____ speeches. Then _____ to the _____. They will _____ and _____ a diploma.

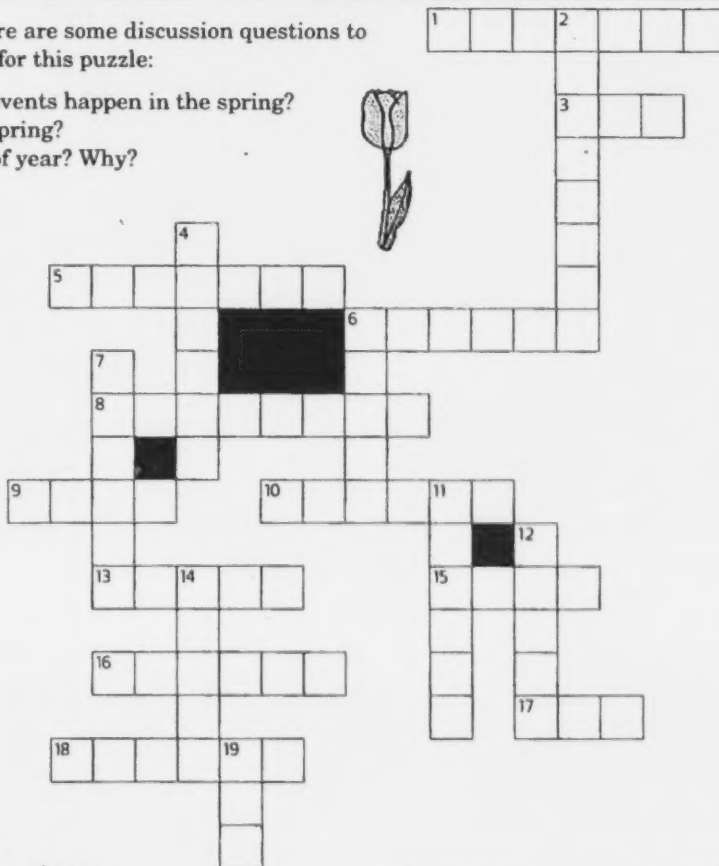
_____ graduation _____ Ben _____ party _____ him. _____ friends. Everyone _____ high school. _____ year, he _____ college.

Multi-level crossword puzzle: Spring

Note to instructors—Here are some discussion questions to help your students prepare for this puzzle:

What holidays and special events happen in the spring?
What do people like about spring?
What is your favorite time of year? Why?

Have the students select Level A or Level B to start on. Notice that the clues are exactly the same, but the missing words are different. Students who work on Level A may be able to succeed at Level B afterwards. (Show the students the word list only if they need some help.)



Word list

clean
clocks
Day
Earth
Easter
end
finish
flowers
garden
green
holiday
mother
Passover
plant
rain
sale
spring
tax
weddings
winter

Level A

Across clues

1. People are very happy to see daffodils, tulips and other _____ in the spring.
3. "Memorial _____" is at the end of May. On this day people remember soldiers who died in war.
5. "Cinco de Mayo" is a Mexican _____, but many people celebrate it in the U.S.
6. In the spring we move the _____ one hour forward. This is called "Daylight Savings Time."
8. "_____" is an important Jewish holiday in the spring.
9. If there is too much _____ in the spring, some places will have floods.
10. In the spring, the weather is warmer than in the _____, but not too hot.
13. Every spring it is nice to see _____ leaves on the trees again.
15. On the weekend you can go to a garage _____ and find used clothes, furniture and kitchen items to buy.
16. In the spring, some people plant flowers and vegetables in their _____.

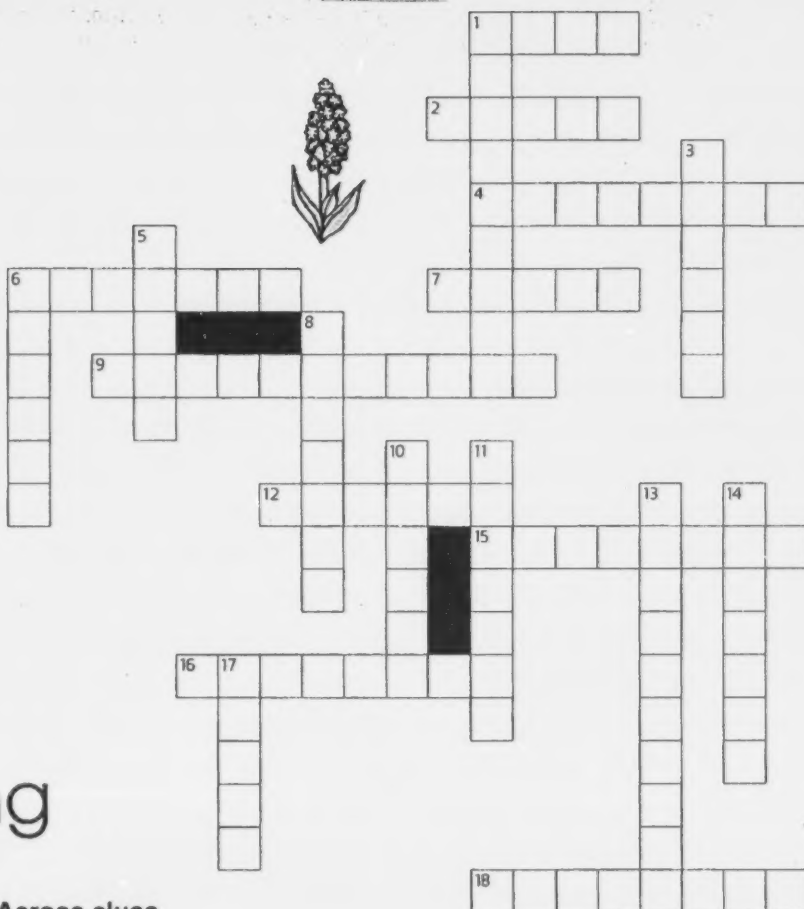
17. Every April, Americans have to fill out their _____ forms and send them to the IRS.
18. In May, don't forget to send your _____ a card or a gift for Mother's Day.

Down clues

2. Spring is a popular time to get married. There are many _____ in June.
4. Students who _____ high school or college have a graduation ceremony in the spring.
6. In the spring, some people like to _____ their home. This is called "spring cleaning."
7. There are four seasons in the year: _____, summer, winter and fall.
11. "_____" is an important Christian holiday in the spring.
12. "Arbor Day" is a special day in April when many people like to _____ a tree.
14. "_____ Day" is a special day in the spring to think about the environment.
19. In the spring, school children are happy because it is the _____ of the school year.

Word list

Arbor Day
card
children
Christian
Cinco
cleaning
environment
fill out
floods
forward
garage
graduation
happy
Jewish
married
plant
seasons
soldiers
trees
warmer



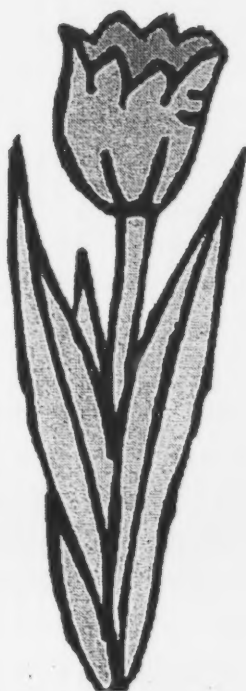
Spring Level B

Across clues

1. In May, don't forget to send your mother a _____ or a gift for Mother's Day.
2. Every spring it is nice to see green leaves on the _____ again.
4. "Memorial Day" is at the end of May. On this day people remember _____ who died in war.
6. Every April, Americans have to _____ their tax forms and send them to the IRS.
7. "_____ de Mayo" is a Mexican holiday, but many people in the U.S. celebrate it.
9. "Earth Day" is a special day to think about the _____.
12. On the weekend you can go to a _____ sale and find used clothes, furniture and kitchen items to buy.
15. "_____ " is a special day in April when many people like to plant a tree.
16. In the spring, school _____ are happy because it is the end of the school year.
18. In the spring, some people like to clean their home. This is called "spring _____."

Down clues

1. "Easter" is an important _____ holiday in spring.
3. "Passover" is an important _____ holiday in spring.
5. In the spring, some people _____ flowers and vegetables in their garden.
6. If there is too much rain in the spring, some places will have _____.
8. In the spring we move the clocks one hour _____. This is called "Daylight Savings Time."
10. In the spring, the weather is _____ than in the winter, but not too hot.
11. There are four _____ in the year: spring, summer, winter and fall.
13. Students who finish high school or college have a _____ ceremony in the spring.
14. Spring is a popular time to get _____. There are many weddings in June.
17. People are very _____ to see daffodils, tulips and other flowers in the spring.



From the field: Endangered species project

Springtime is a great time to teach about the environment. Earth Day and Arbor Day celebrations and other nature-related local events may interest your students and get them involved in the community. It's a great time to get ESL students communicating about current events as well. You can incorporate news items about the environment from magazines (National Geographic, Audubon, etc.) and newspapers into the class work.

One ESL reading series that my students and I have really enjoyed is the **Oxford Bookworms Factfiles**. I have used the *Rainforests* book in class to read about the environment. Recently we read *Animals in Danger* by Joc Potter & Andy Hopkins in my high-beginning class. This text has a 400-word vocabulary and is quite inexpensive.

The following class project on endangered species ties in really well with the above mentioned text or with other studies about the environment in general.

How to do it

1. Students research an animal of their choice that is endangered. The students can choose an animal from their home country if they wish. Many of my students last semester were from Brazil and Indonesia, so they especially enjoyed reading about animals from their countries! The animals they chose were perfect for this project.

2. Students prepare a brief oral and written presentation. The outline on the next page is a helpful guideline my students have followed when making their presentations. I encourage students to be creative and many have brought wonderful handouts, overhead transparencies, etc.

My class especially enjoyed one student's presentation about panda bears. They learned that there are only a few hundred left! When the class saw the photo/transparency of the pandas, they realized how precious these animals are.

3. Class presentations take about 7-8 minutes each. After the presentations, the other class members and the teacher can ask questions.

Often an interesting discussion follows the presentations. One student who presented about gorillas discussed how often gorilla hands or fingers are used as status keychains. Students were very upset to say the least!

4. A field trip to the zoo is a nice follow-up, especially as the students have gained some knowledge of the animals and where they come from. Our school activities director planned a spring trip to the zoo. Many students who complete a presentation are thrilled when they see or read about an animal that they learned about in class.

Afterthoughts

In my class this activity took about a week and a half, because the student presentations took longer than I expected. I thought this was *fine*, however, because the presentations generated lots of discussion.

This activity "worked wonders" at raising the students' awareness of the environment and they learned a lot about nature in general. Many students learned things even about their own country and were amazed at how animals are so important for our planet. ➡

Reading text

Animals in Danger, 2nd Edition, by Joc Potter and Andy Hopkins. One in a series of readers called Oxford Bookworms Factfiles. Published 1998 by Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-19-422805-3. Paperback; cost is approximately \$6.95.

The book is available from Oxford University Press, 1-800-451-7556, www.oup-usa.org/esl/ or from Alta Book Center (an ESL distributor) 1-800-ALTA/ESL, www.altaesl.com.

Here's a reading, writing, speaking, listening, research and current events project that may be of interest to your students!

Contributed by **Beth Rodacker-Borgens**, ESL instructor at Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Beth's students are enrolled in an intensive English program. Most are 18-19 years old, but there are also some non-traditional students who are older. The students are from Brazil, Peru and Indonesia.





Here is a copy of Beth's handout,
which her students use to work on their
reports.

Name: _____

Endangered species Presentations

1. Animal:
2. Why did you choose this animal?
3. Give a description of the animal. What does it look like? Where does it live?
What does it eat? What are its habits?
4. Problem: Give a summary about this animal's situation. Why is it endangered?
When did it become endangered? etc.
5. Solution: List your ideas and suggestions for solving this animal's problem.
How can we remove this animal from the endangered species list?
6. Appendix. Maps, photos, charts, graphs, etc...

Help for new teachers, part 3: Lesson planning

Dear New Teacher,

In my last letter I suggested that a good way to teach adult ESL classes is to organize them around a theme. This time I'd like to be more specific and talk about planning lessons *within* themes. When I plan a lesson (and, believe me, after more than 35 years of teaching I still plan each class carefully!) I think about what I want to teach and how I want to teach it.

What I want to teach

Before I can plan a lesson, I need to know what I want to teach, not just at the lesson level but in the unit as a whole. Let's say I'm teaching a unit on daily activities in a high beginning class. By the end of this unit I want my students to be able to name daily activities, tell time and days of the week. I want them to be able to use the simple present tense to tell what they do every day, as well as using correct verb forms and pronouns to tell what others do. I want them to be able to ask and answer yes/no questions about their daily activities and use *before* and *after* correctly. I also want them to be able to read and write schedules and calendars and to read and write short narratives about daily activities.

Things to take into consideration

1. **Chunking:** By "chunking," I mean looking at what goes together. For example, it makes sense to work on third person pronouns (he, she) at the same time as third person -s in simple present. If I were teaching telling time in a literacy class, I might consider reviewing numbers to 12 and teaching the hours on a clock as one chunk; with reviewing numbers to 60 and minutes on a clock as a separate chunk to be taught after the first is mastered.

2. **Sequence:** I also need to consider the order in which I do things. For example, writing a daily schedule, sharing it with a partner and then writing a paragraph about it are a sequence, each one building on the preceding one. In beginning classes, teachers often find out that they omitted a step (such as modeling questions before having students ask them) when they are confronted with a class of bewildered students.

3. **Skills:** I want to be sure that each class includes some practice of each skill—listening, speaking, reading and writing. If the class is going to read a story, they might begin by talking about the title and predicting what the story will be about, then listening to it, and finally reading it. Some oral work on vocabulary, discussion of the story and written exercises might follow the reading.

4. **Grouping:** I want my class to have a mix of activities—whole class, teacher-directed activities along with individual, pair or small group work. Whole class activities give teachers a chance to model and to lead the class but don't provide as much chance for participation as pairs or small groups do. Individual work gives a student a chance to work at his or her own pace without the pressure of the whole class or a partner. When the students are introduced to the daily activities picture cards, they first label them on the back, working individually. Then I say the name of the activity and the students hold up the appropriate card. Later, after they have learned to say the names of the activities, they can practice in twos or threes with one student quizzing the other(s).

5. **Learning modes:** People learn best in different ways and a lesson should take this into account. Some students learn best by listening while others have to see the words written down. Some learn best through physical activity while others rely on an emotional connection with the material. Some prefer to work alone and others prefer to interact with others. To some extent these reflect personal preference but some are based on the style of previous schooling.

6. **Difficulty level:** In each class session there should be some familiar, comfortable activities as well as some which are new and more challenging. One way to increase the level of difficulty is to use new material in a familiar activity. Another is to use familiar material in a new activity. For example, if literacy students are used to having numbers dictated to them, it's a small step to dictations involving times. In a higher class, the

by Abbie Tom

This is the third in a series of articles with practical advice for new teachers. Abbie is a veteran ESL instructor in North Carolina and is co-author of several books for ESL teachers. Her main ESL focus is on adult students.

Parts 1 and 2 in this series appeared in our last two issues; Vol. 10, No.'s 5 and 6.

"...after more than 35 years of teaching I still plan each class carefully!"

teacher can dictate a person's daily schedule. The same familiar material can be made more difficult if the activities are dictated out of order and the students have to sequence them.

7. Personalization: Students are more likely to remember material that is related to themselves. For example, sorting daily activity cards into things you do and things you don't do helps to personalize the vocabulary. Comparing the "dos" and "don'ts" with a partner further personalizes it.

The lesson (an example)

Let's assume this is a lesson in the middle of a unit on daily activities with a high beginning class. The students have been introduced to the vocabulary of daily activities and time, as well as simple present. The class is two and a half hours long.

1. Find an open space in the classroom or in the hall. Put down pieces of paper that say 12:00, 3:00, 6:00 and 9:00 as they would be on a clock. Tell students to stand at their favorite time of day. After everybody is located, have them tell what they do at that time.
2. Review "when" questions, using information from the previous activity. Ask some students: "When do you get up?" "When do you eat lunch?" Write some examples of the questions on the board.
3. Have students individually write 5 "when do you..." questions. Then assign them to partners (this can be done by having them line up according to what time they wake up, for example, and pairing them off). Each person asks his or her partner the 5 questions (without showing them) and writes down the answers. This can be repeated with a second partner.
4. Look at some of the daily activities verbs with "I." Then put "he" and the form with final -s. Do the same with "she." Have the students report on their partners' answers from #3 using third person. Be sure that he and she are used appropriately (I do this by expressing shock when José is called *she*, for example).
5. Use a jazz chant for a change of pace. The one by Carolyn Graham (*Jazz Chants*) called "Wake up! Wake up!" works beautifully in this theme. When I first introduce it, the students repeat it after me. Later they do it with me saying half the lines and the class responding or with two halves of the class saying the lines. This can be done in several different class sessions.
6. Read a story. Two that work well with this theme are "Oh Boy! What a Ride!" in *More True Stories* and "Rose Sullivan's Day" in *Personal Stories 3*. The latter can also be used as a model for students writing about their own days. Another is a set of readings on astronaut Sally Ride describing daily life in space in *Countdown*. (My program buys class sets of these books, which students share and use in class. There are about 10 copies of each book for a class of 20 to 25) See #3 in "things to take into consideration" (above) for procedures.

Look at the sample lesson plan below. How did I do? Go back to "things to take into consideration" on the previous page and see how this lesson fits with the points I made there. Is there something missing? What would you add?

I hope that this has been helpful to you as you plan your own lessons. ☛

Sincerely,
Abbie

Editor's note: Take a close look at Abbie's lesson! You'll find clever ideas and tips woven into it that you might not have thought of before.

Materials mentioned here:

Jazz Chants by Carolyn Graham. Published 1978 by Oxford University Press, ISBN 0-19-502407-9. Audio tape also available.

More True Stories by Sandra Heyer. Second edition published 1997 by Pearson Education. ISBN 0-201-69516-2. Audiocassette also available.

Personal Stories 3 by Koch, Mrowicki and Ruttenberg. Published 1985 by Linmore Publishing. ISBN 0-916591-15-8.

Countdown: Taking Off into Content Reading by Alison Rice. Published 1990 by Maxwell MacMillan/Heinle & Heinle. ISBN 0-838-43379-0. THIS TEXT IS OUT OF PRINT. (Look for it in libraries or resource centers.)

You can order ESL titles from distributors such as:

- Alta Book Center, 1-800-ALTA/ESL, www.altaesl.com
- Delta Systems Co., 1-800-323-8270, www.delta-systems.com.

Idea file:

More beginning-level homework ideas

In a previous issue (Vol. 7, No. 4) we gave some good ideas for small assignments that beginning students can do outside of class. These are so useful, we are bringing you some additional ideas here. Beginners and literacy-level students will find these tasks do-able. This is one way to connect students' in-class learning with the real world.

Choose one of the topics to present to the students. Make sure everyone understands the task, and that they understand when to report back. In the following session, ask each student to give their answers, and discuss how they found the information. You can have them report orally, or write their answers on a class chart.

In some cases, you may want to discuss with the students in advance how they can get the information, but in most cases it's best to let them find their own strategies and report back on this later. (For example, a person could find the name of a car by watching on the street, by looking at TV and print ads, or by asking someone.) Discovery is part of the exercise!

For the interview questions, it may help for students to practice these first in class. If you assign one of these tasks each week, you'll be helping your students to connect with their environment. ➡

If you have some more good ideas of tasks that your students enjoy, please consider sharing these with our readers! Thanks!

Find the name of 2 cars you like. Find the name of 1 car you don't like.

Find the name of 2 supermarkets. Which one do you like better?

Find the name of 2 banks. Which one is closest to your home?

Write the name of a TV show you like. Write the name of a TV show you don't like.

Write the names of 10 items in your home.

Ask 3 neighbors (or co-workers) to tell you where they were born.

Ask 3 neighbors (or co-workers) to tell you their favorite kind of music.

Find out the names of 3 movies.

Find out the names of 3 magazines.

Find 2 ads for shoes. How much do they cost?

News & notes:

New PBS television series about and for immigrants

Today's pioneers

Hands-on English has just learned about the "Pioneer Living" series, a 9-part weekly broadcast featuring guests from many different cultures and ethnic backgrounds. The series may be of interest to your students, as it explores what it takes to succeed for new Americans.

Topics include adapting to a new culture, understanding cultural differences, stereotypes, Americanization, tolerance, civic duty.

Each episode features interviews with guest experts and successful immigrants. Although we haven't seen this series yet, it sounds like a promising source of information both for newcomers and others who would like to understand the process of starting new in a new country.

You can find out more details about this series at www.pbs.org/pioneerliving. Video tapes for use in class are also available, as well as companion books in English, Spanish, Russian and Bosnian/Croatian. (Check your local PBS station for dates and times; you can find your local station through www.pbs.org)

Advertising

The Great Big BINGO Book by Nina Ito and Anne Berry. New in 2001! A photocopiable collection of 44 varied, creative games. Suitable for beginning through intermediate students, topics include everyday vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, writing skills and cultural topics including holidays. ISBN 0-86647-140-5. \$25.

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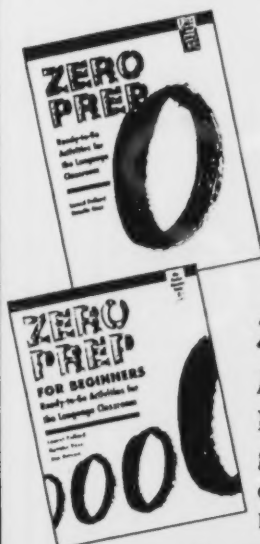
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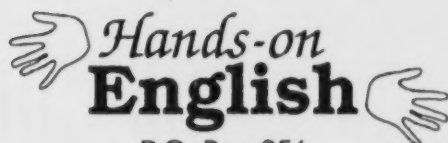
News & notes

In past Issues

If you're looking for lessons with a summer theme, see our crossword puzzle "Summertime" in *Hands-on English* Vol. 6, No. 1 and "Keeping cool in the summer" in Vol. 9, No. 2. On the topic of spring flooding, several years ago we published a grammar exercise about using nouns with or without "the" (general vs. specific) with floods in the Midwest as the topic—see Vol. 3, No. 5.

Minigrants available

Do you know about the Hands-on English Minigrants? Each year we award several small grants for innovative teaching projects. You can find more information about these grants on our website, or contact the HOE office for an application form. There is still time to apply! The deadline this year is June 30, 2001. ➡



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Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

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Discovering old & new ideas

Recently we heard part of a radio broadcast that was very interesting to us, because it was about magazine editors! The reporter was asking several editors of magazines on various topics (fishing, bowling, etc.) how they keep their subject interesting, year after year. Indeed, those editors they interviewed admitted that it can be pretty hard to come up with something new for each issue, and that there are only so many times they can write "10 tips to improve your bowling," etc. before it gets repetitive.

For a minute, we paused to wonder if *Hands-on English* might suffer from the same problem—after ten years, could our tips for your teaching start to get boring? From the editor's point of view, will we find ourselves losing interest? What a dismal prospect that would be.

Of course, there's a big difference between teaching and bowling, or any other hobby for that matter. Once you've mastered knocking down all the pins, what else is there? Whereas in teaching, there really never is a "mastery" of the art. No matter how expert you are, new students will come along that will challenge you all over from scratch.

We see evidence of this all the time in our mail—many of our readers are experienced in teaching other subjects but are new to ESL. Or, they have taught ESL to young students but never to adults. Or, they have taught advanced students before but now are faced with beginners for the first time. Or, they are used to teaching Asian students but now have a class of Hispanic students. These instructors are good at what they do,

and they are using *Hands-on English* to make some fresh discoveries about how students learn.

While bowling alleys tend to be uniform, every classroom is different and every human being in every classroom is different. No two people learn in exactly the same way. Experienced teachers often find that, when they give a favorite lesson they've used many times in the past, suddenly a student will ask a question or make a connection that the teacher had never thought of before. Watching students learn is an endlessly interesting process.

Speaking as a teacher, we don't think we'll ever get tired of new teaching ideas, or even of old teaching ideas used in new ways. And even old teaching ideas, used in old ways, can have new results! Because the students are people, and people are unpredictable, this process will always be fascinating. Speaking as your editor, we find that the questions that come up are still challenging and new, and we don't know all the answers. If we did know all the answers, we'd probably be ready to quit, and maybe start a bowling magazine. But we're still enjoying the discovery process with you.

In this issue

Summer can be a restful time, a transition between a busy spring and a busy fall. But, if you are relocating to a new residence it's a different kind of transition—a hectic one! Many of our readers and their students typically change their address over the summer. If that includes you, we're sure you'll identify with the theme of several of our activities in this issue: Moving day!

Happy teaching! —the Editor. ☛

Hands-on English

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About the publication

We're starting our second decade! *Hands-on English* has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

The articles and ideas in HOE come from experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have a lesson or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?

Our subscribers work with ESL students in a wide range of programs, including: Refugee programs, Literacy programs, Community colleges, Colleges and universities, Correctional facilities, Resource centers, **Adult Education programs**, Volunteer tutoring, Intensive ESL programs, Teacher training programs, Religious organizations, Worker's unions, Community Education programs, Secondary schools, Workplace education, Language institutes, Libraries . . . and more!

What do our readers have in common? They are dedicated, they are working under sometimes difficult conditions, and they are looking for practical, adult level materials that will help their students learn English.

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Only three percent of our income comes from advertising. Our editorial decisions are independent. ➔



Your editor, Anna Silliman, is never too busy to talk with a subscriber!

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Letters

**...& cards,
emails,
calls,
rumors,
etc.**

Ideas for 'Welcome Center'?

"My name is Eva Venczel and I am the ESL Program Manager for a non-profit group in Charleston, SC, called Trident Literacy Association. This fiscal year we have about 600 Adult ESL students of various backgrounds and levels. Currently we are in the planning stages of creating a 'Welcome Center' for all internationals in the area providing information necessary to begin a new life in little known surroundings. Our budget is small, but we will offer a computer with internet services that will be dedicated to these students. We'll be developing brochure type flyers in several languages. If anyone has prior experience or ideas relative to our needs, I would very much appreciate your help. My email address is evvvenczel@yahoo.com. Thank you!"

Teaching about apologies?

"First let me say how invaluable HOE and the newsletter has been to me. I'm now teaching a class of adults in the intermediate level. Any suggestions on how I can teach the art of making apologies? Any fables or stories you can recommend to tie in with the lesson? Thanks."

—Nita Leslie, via email

We did publish a crossword puzzle on this topic, in Volume 5, Number 1. We'd love to hear some ideas from our readers!

Newspaper lessons for jail students

In our last issue, a reader asked for suggestions for her class of beginning students in a jail setting. One reader has responded with some good ideas about using newspapers as teaching material:

"I have found that using the regular newspaper (in small segments) is a great teaching tool. Here, our local newspaper has a 'Newspapers in Education' (NIE) Program. Through sponsorship by local businesses, each student in my class receives the newspaper, free, each night of class. We work on small sections like headlines, horoscope, classified ads, sale inserts, local news, etc.

"A couple of weeks ago, we looked at the 'Obituaries.' The students had no idea what this was. I told them that, 'This is the section you read first every morning. If your name isn't there, you get up, shower, etc.' I asked what these people had done to get their names in the paper. Finally, someone said, 'Dead!!!!' It's amazing how much vocabulary even the obituaries provide. We also got into customs in different countries pertaining to funerals. We talked about customs here, wakes, what to wear, what do you say, how long do you stay at the funeral parlor. . .

"Students really enjoy the classifieds, especially the 'help wanted' section. This can be used to work on Workplace English which is boundless. Pretending to answer an ad by phone, interview skills, body language, dress, importance of being 'on time', learning that it's OK to ask for clarification and so on.

"Classified ads about things 'for sale,' particularly with reference to CAFS. . . calling to inquire about an ad, what to ask, writing your questions down before you call, comparing prices, etc. Students can work on telephone skills. . . I'm not sure if this material is appropriate for a jail but I know that students have been particularly enthusiastic in using this medium, as long as they're not asked to read the newspaper on their own. In a guided situation, they really seem to enjoy it. Even if the instructor chooses the article or section and photocopies just that part."

—Carole Lindstedt
Lake Shawnee, New Jersey

Anniversary greeting

"Thank you for being my 'helping hands' through these past ten years—through public, private school teaching, and now adult tutoring. It's so nice have complete activities, ready-made, to incorporate."

—Lynda Molnár
Greenville, South Carolina

Tools & techniques: Magazine pictures and advertisements

One person in my small household subscribes to *Time*. We also get *Newsweek* handed down to us by a relative. Among other magazines that seem to regularly find their way about the place are *Harper's*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Contact Kids*, *Cooking Light*, *Natural History*, and *Outside*. All these titles, unlike the precious *National Geographic*, are "recyclable." That is, sooner or later, they end up in a yellow bin to be set at the curb for the weekly pickup.

Before I consign the magazines to the newspaper bin, however, I flip through each of them as a final rite. I have been culling resource materials from magazines for many years, not only for timely news stories and feature articles, but also for their visual content. Generally I have saved only pictures which are a full page in size and which have little or no text on them.

In my file drawer, I have four folders containing visual materials from magazines: "People," "People in groups," "Indoor and outdoor scenes," and "Artsy and bizarre." The "People" pictures show only one person. Sometimes they are part of an advertisement (I remove the text), such as the handsome young man in his Eddie Bauer togs on a windswept beach. I use these for descriptive activities at the lower levels in both speaking and writing classes. For example, each student may get a picture which they use as a prompt for a preliminary oral exercise, to write a paragraph, or to send a voice mail message. Students are usually required to go beyond just plain physical descriptions, which are of course useful vocabulary practice, and add some inferential observations about the person's thoughts and background. I am also gathering pictures of well-known personalities which I plan to use as props for research projects and "famous people" interviews at the lower levels.

"People in groups" pictures, such as a photo showing neighborhood kids playing baseball, may also be used for descriptive exercises although they lend themselves much better to action narratives. Students may compose, orally or in writing, stories about what is going on in their picture. I will require use of either present, past, or future

time, or a story which contains all three. In addition, the stories should include inferences in answer to self-posed questions such as: "Why is the girl in the yellow sweater crying?" "What's going to happen next?" These pictures can also be used in reading classes to make inferences based on stimuli relating to all the senses. For example: "Why is the girl in the yellow sweater crying?" ...She has a muddy mark on her cheek, so perhaps a ball hit her hard. One of the boys is laughing, so she may also be feeling humiliated.

My folder for "Indoor and outdoor scenes" contains pictures of bucolic Italian landscapes as well as cozy living room scenes with Christmas stockings and a crackling fire. These pictures don't have people in them, but they can be used for the same descriptive and narrative purposes I have detailed in the previous paragraphs.

Finally, my favorite folder is "Artsy and bizarre." These pictures, out of the context in which they appeared in the magazine, are not immediately decipherable. For example, there is the close-up of the elephants's eye, a man with a beard of honey bees, and a pile of colorful plastic products with the two arms of a mannequin reaching out of its center. I have used these pictures for students to practice modals, showing speculation or informed guesses: "It could/may/might be..." or perhaps finally "It must be..." Some of these pictures may also be used to stimulate more challenging narratives. One that has excited student comment in the past is a photograph of a "sloth wash," a man hosing down a very soapy three-toed sloth as it clings to a clothes line!

Once I am able to gather a class set of pictures, about 30, for a particular purpose, I staple them to thin cardboard. My folders are full of pictures that have yet to be used and I collect many more each month. ESL teachers reading this will come up with many more ideas on using magazine illustrations. Don't throw away a good visual if you can save it as a teaching resource! ➤

by **John Sparks**,
ESL teacher at Sylvania
Campus, Portland Com-
munity College in Port-
land, Oregon.

Editor's note: This article originally appeared in the *ORTESOL Quarterly Newsletter*, Vol. 23, No. 1, in John's column 'Accessories; A Column Devoted to the Little Things in Teaching.' We thank him for permission to reprint it for you here!

ORTESOL has not only a great newsletter but an informative website as well—you can visit them at <http://babel.uoregon.edu/ortesol/index.html>

Students can use interesting pictures for a myriad of language activities!



Hints & tips

More about pictures!

If you are anything like us, the previous article may have inspired you to clip and organize some magazine pictures for your class!

We asked some of our teaching friends for additional ideas about using pictures for ESL students, and here are some of their great tips.



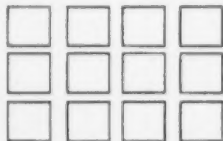
(With a snip, snip here and a snip, snip there—a teacher prepares a creative lesson!)

Memory game

Linda Phipps suggests, "Show a busy picture for a minute. Put it away. Have the students recall as much about the picture as they can remember." This is a good way for intermediate or advanced students to review vocabulary and practice describing something, while testing their visual recall.

Which picture?

Linda also suggests this visual activity for intermediate or advanced students: "Lay out a dozen pictures in four rows of three pictures each. Have each student secretly choose one picture and describe it. The others must guess which picture the student described, i.e., 'It was the first picture in row three.'"



This works best if the pictures in each row are fairly similar, so the students have to describe their choice in enough detail that the others know which one it is. For example, one row might all be different people watching TV; the student must describe what is different about the picture he or she chose.

"A variation of this for more advanced students is to play Twenty Questions. Each student in turn secretly chooses a picture. Others have to ask 'yes' or 'no' questions to guess which picture it is."

Describe feelings

Sally O'Dwyer suggests using evocative photos to talk about about people's feelings. She says, "The teacher could discuss the topic of feelings and then show pictures, asking the class how the pictures made them feel. This is also fun to do with music selections."

If you have people pictures with strong feelings illustrated in them, students could speculate how the person in each picture feels, and why, and write a story from that person's point of view. (This makes an imaginative lesson for a substitute teacher, especially for intermediate or advanced levels.)

Matching activity

For her beginning level students, ESL teacher Abbie Tom prepares this activity: "I have made up some simple one-paragraph stories about 'people pictures.' I put the pictures up on the board with letters, then the stories (in large print) with numbers. The students match them. I also have another version of the same exercise, but with the stories in strips. By writing the stories myself I can include whatever vocabulary and content we're working on."

Simple descriptions

Describing pictures doesn't have to be limited to students at higher levels—Abbie also does this with beginners: "When we study housing, for example, I give each student (or pair of students) a picture of a house. They write down 5 words about 'their house' on the board. Then we look at the pictures of the houses and guess which house each set of words represents." You could do a variation of this even with literacy-level students.

*Editor's note: Abbie Tom and co-author Heather McKay's **The Card Book** has more ideas for interactive activities using pictures, and includes over 240 photocopyable drawings. ISBN 1-882483-79-0, available from Alta, 1-800-ALTA/ESL or www.altaesl.com.*

Create-a-family

Here's a very interesting way to use people pictures. Abbie reports that she heard about this activity at a conference:

"Divide the class into groups. Give each group a picture of a family. When they study personal information, they make up and write personal information about each of 'their' family members. When they study about family, they can add another piece of paper and write about the family using that information. When they study food they write another paper about the family's food preferences, etc. Each time they re-read (review) what they wrote before so they have a cumulative record of what they've studied in their description of an imaginary family."

This is a great way to provide continuity from one lesson to the next. If you do this you'll want to make sure you have regular attenders in each group of students, if possible.

Continued, next page. . .

Clothing vocabulary

Of course, nothing beats fashion magazines and clothing catalogs to illustrate all the varieties of clothing, styles, colors, fabrics and patterns your students might want to learn about and discuss.

Janice Langland has the ultimate source for illustrating clothing, though: "A wonderful resource for my classroom was an old *Simplicity Pattern* book. At first it was used for basic vocabulary (skirt, dress, pajamas), and later for details (collar, zipper, sleeve). Still later came the *types* of collars and sleeves." Usually pattern books have very clear diagrams and drawings.

Comic strip stories

Janice has used Sunday comics from the local newspaper as a resource also, although she says not all comics are appropriate for this. She would present a copy of a carefully

selected strip with any text or dialog removed. The class would then discuss and describe each picture, and generate a sentence for each frame, which the teacher would write on the board. Students would copy these sentences down and practice reading them aloud several times.

This exercise gives the students reading, writing and pronunciation practice in the context of a story and best of all includes some humor which makes it fun and memorable. The activity can be especially useful for beginners and literacy-level students, as they can take the pictures and their written text home for further practice. ➡

Scrambled sentences activity: Moving day!

The Wu family decided to move to a new apartment.

They packed all their things in boxes.

Mr. Wu's friend Joe came with his truck.

They loaded all the boxes onto the truck.

Then they drove to the new apartment.

They unloaded the truck.

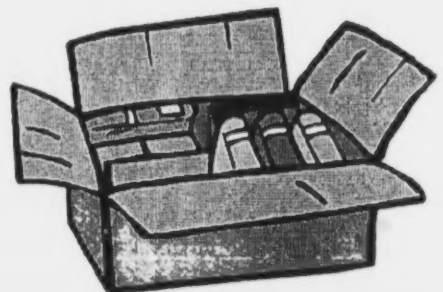
They carried the boxes into the new apartment.

They unpacked all their things.

After that, they were very tired.

These 9 sentences form a simple version of the story on page 7.

To use this as a warm-up activity, copy this page and cut the sentences apart. In groups of 3 or 4, have the students try to put the strips in the correct order (advanced students should do this orally). Have them read the finished story aloud. Then, see if anyone can tell the story without looking at the strips.



Reading activity: Moving day!



The Wu family is moving to a new apartment. They have to pack their clothes, dishes and other things. The children will help.

When they move, many things will change. The children will have a new school. They will have a new teacher and new friends. The family will have a new address, 600 West 30th Street, Apartment 12.

There are many things to do. Mr. Wu has to get a new drivers license. Mrs. Wu has to call the telephone company. She will cancel the old telephone account and get a new one. They will also tell the post office to forward their mail to the new address. Later they will send post-cards to their friends and relatives with the new address.

On moving day, Mr. Wu's friend Joe will come with his truck. They will load all of their things onto the truck. The children will get in the car, and everyone will drive to the new apartment. Then, they will work hard to unload the truck. They will carry the boxes into the new house and unpack everything. It's a busy day!

Discussion

1. Why do you think the Wu family is moving to a new apartment?
2. Is it easy or difficult to move? Why?
3. When was the last time you moved? Explain how you did it.

Writing

1. On moving day, there are many things to remember! Please write a list of things for the Wu family to do.
2. Please help Mrs. Wu write a letter to her friends about the new address.

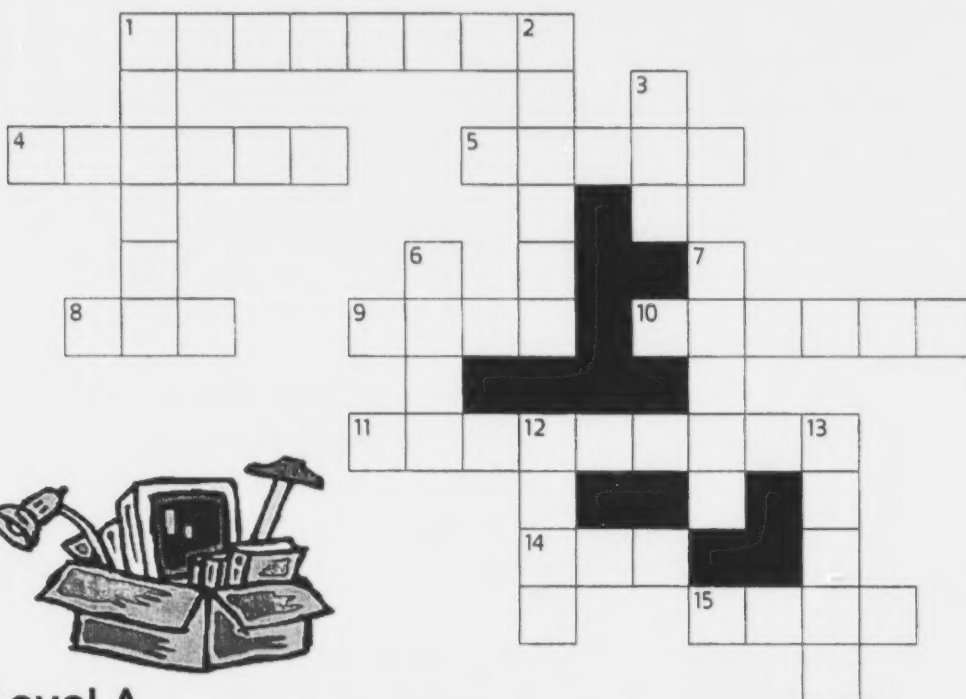
Note to the instructor:

Moving day is something most students have experienced, perhaps even several times. They may have plenty of stories to relate about the problems of moving, or advice to give about how to do it.

Use the scrambled sentence activity on page 6 either as a warm-up, or as a follow up to this reading.

The sentences on page 6 can also be used as a simpler version of the story for literacy-level students to read and write. In this case, try illustrating the story for them with simple stick figures to make the meaning clear. ➡

Multi-level crossword puzzle: Moving day



Level A

Across clues

1. "Will your _____ go to the same school after you move?" "No, they'll go to a new school."
4. "Is your new apartment furnished?" "Yes, but we have to get a new table and some _____."
5. "Why are you moving?" "Our old apartment is too _____. The new apartment is bigger, and it has air conditioning."
8. After we pay the deposit for the apartment, our new landlord will give us the _____."
9. "Is your new apartment _____ here?" "No, it's far from here. We have to drive a long way."
10. We are _____ next week, so we have to pack all our things.
11. "How big is your new _____?" "It has two bedrooms, a living room and a big kitchen."
14. "When are you moving to your _____ apartment?" "In about one month."
15. Before moving day, we have to _____ our clothes, dishes and other things in boxes.

Down clues

1. Don't forget to _____ your drivers license after you move. You have to give them your new address.
2. "What's your new telephone _____?" "I don't know yet. I'll call you after we move to the new apartment."
3. In the post office: "Can you tell me how to change my address?" "You need to fill out this form. Write your _____ address here, and your new address there."
6. "Can I help you on moving day?" "Sure! You can _____ us to load the truck."
7. "We need some _____ for packing. Where can I find some?" "You can ask at the grocery store."
12. "Are there any apartments for _____ where you live?" "I don't know. You can ask my landlord."
13. After we unload the _____, we have to unpack all our things and put them in the new apartment.

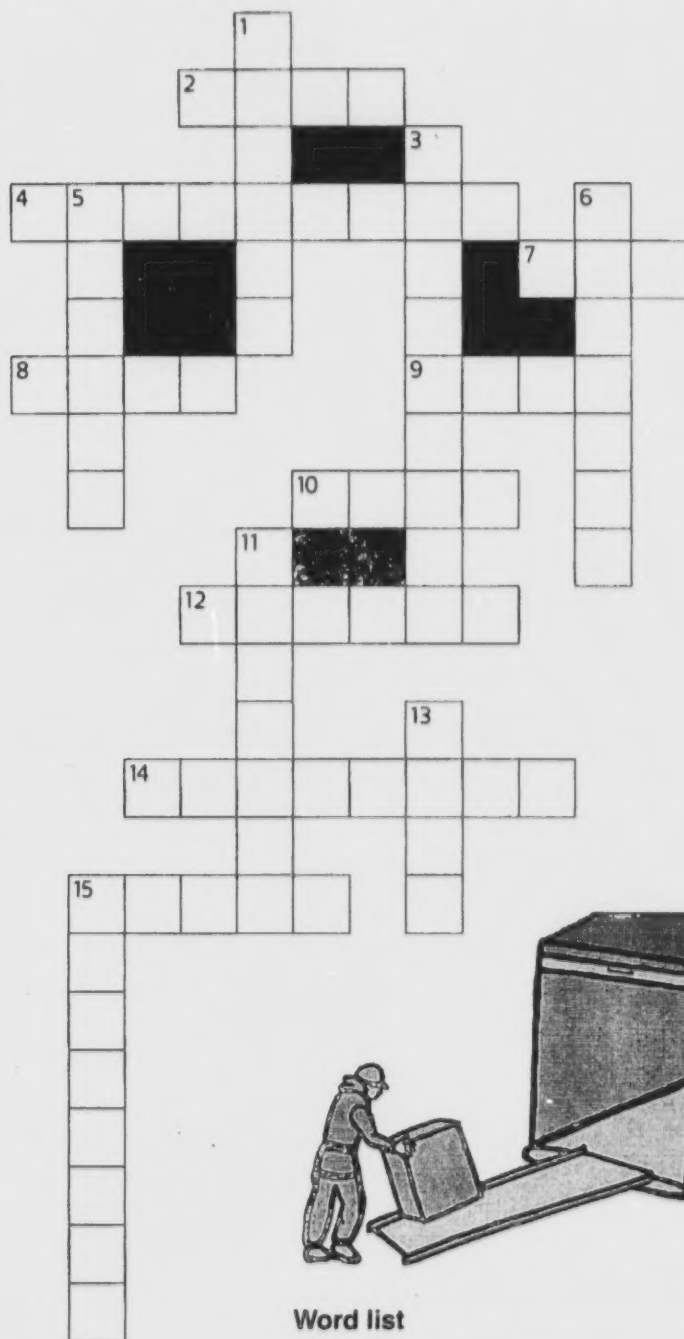
Word list

apartment
boxes
chairs
change
children
help
key
moving
near
new
number
old
pack
rent
small
truck

Note to instructors:

These two puzzles use much the same vocabulary as the reading on page 7. Level B is a little bit harder than Level A. Both puzzles use the same sentences as clues, but the missing words are different. Therefore, students who complete Level A may become familiar enough with the vocabulary to complete Level B successfully.

Provide the word lists only if the students need some extra help. ➤



Word list

bedrooms	license
bigger	load
boxes	move
far	moving
form	pack
furnished	packing
know	telephone
landlord	unload

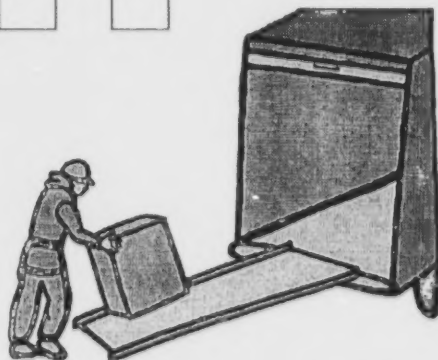
Level B

Across clues

2. "Can I help you on moving day?" "Sure! You can help us to _____ the truck."
4. "Is your new apartment _____?" "Yes, but we have to get a new table and some chairs."
7. "Is your new apartment near here?" "No, it's _____ from here. We have to drive a long way."
8. At the post office: "Can you tell me how to change my address?" "You need to fill out this _____. Write your old address here, and your new address there."
9. We are moving next week, so we have to _____ all our things.
10. "Are there any apartments for rent where you live?" "I don't _____. You can ask my landlord."
12. "Why are you moving?" "Our old apartment is too small. The new apartment is _____, and it has air conditioning."
14. After we pay the deposit for the apartment, our new _____ will give us the key.
15. Before moving day, we have to pack all of our clothes, dishes and other things in _____.

Down clues

1. "When are you _____ to your new apartment?" "In about one month."
3. "What's your new _____ number?" "I don't know yet. I'll call you after we move to the new apartment."
5. After we _____ the truck, we have to unpack all our things and put them in the new apartment.
6. "We need some boxes for _____. Where can I find some?" "You can ask at the grocery store."
11. Don't forget to change your drivers _____ after you move. You have to give them your new address.
13. "Will your children go to the same school after you _____?" "No, they'll go to a new school."
15. "How big is your new apartment?" "It has two _____, a living room and a big kitchen."



ESL game: 'Moving day' board game

Here's a simple and fun way for your students to practice vocabulary on the topic of moving. It's a good follow-up activity to the reading passage or the crossword puzzles in this issue.

How to do it

Students can do this activity in pairs, or in groups of 3 or 4, so make a copy of the board for each group. If you are tutoring, you can also play this game with one student.

Each student needs a small object for a marker. You'll also need dice or a spinner for each group. Students take turns rolling the die (or spinning) and moving around the board. The students have to make a sentence about moving day with the word that they landed on.

Writing

When each student has had a chance to say several sentences, you can stop the game and turn it into a writing exercise. Ask the students to volunteer a sentence for each word, and write these on the board. Then,

use the student sentences for a dictation activity.

Variation

Ask the students to repeat the game, but this time they must start each sentence with: "Don't forget to. . ." For example, "Don't forget to call the landlord and ask him for the key." This is good grammar practice, and even beginning students can do this if they are already familiar with the vocabulary.

Another variation is to make a question each time. For example, "What is your new phone number?" "Can I help you unload the truck?"

Why it works

The activity is just structured enough to give students confidence that they can succeed, and just unstructured enough to let them try expressing ideas in their own words. It's a good intermediate step toward more open-ended communication. ➡

*The idea for this activity comes from a book by Eileen A. Schwartz called **GRIDIT: A Grid Game Book for Communication**. ISBN 14-94010-05-1. In the book, Eileen presents 30 such games on many topics of interest to adult students. They are suitable for beginning and intermediate levels.*

The book is available from Alta Book Center, 1-800-ALTA/ESL or www.altaesl.com. You can also check the author's website at www.gridit.com.



pack	boxes	load	school	land-lord
post office	<i>Moving day</i>			truck
apart-ment	phone number	unload	unpack	address

Minigrant report: Student-made home safety exhibit

by **B. Katherine Adams**, Even Start Family Literacy Program at Tegeler Career Center in Pasadena, Texas. (Each of the adult students in this program has at least one child under the age of seven.)

Every year, Hands-on English awards a few small grants for 'hands-on' student projects. You can find out more about these grants on our website, at www.handsongenlish.com

Our goal for this project was to have our Intermediate ESL class participate in a community health and safety fair that is held each year at a local school. The topic of our exhibit would be "Safety at Home." Because the students all have young children, they are motivated by a desire to make a safe living environment for them.

The purpose of our involvement in the community health fair was three-fold. We wanted our students to learn useful information that could positively impact their lives. We also wanted them to have a real-life context in which to learn English. Finally, we hoped that they would gain a sense of accomplishment that comes from helping others.

Gathering information

Throughout the year, the students listened to a variety of public health and safety speakers from a number of community agencies. The topics included: *Diabetes Awareness, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Breast Cancer Awareness, Second-hand Smoking, Gang Prevention, Lead Poisoning Prevention, and Fire Safety*. Our program also offered free CPR classes to our students outside of our regular class meeting time. Many of our program participants earned their certification in CPR.

In addition to guest speakers, students also gathered information about home safety on related Internet sites and watched a video produced by the American Red Cross.

Preparing the exhibit

The health and safety fair was set for April 28th. In March our Intermediate ESL

class began brainstorming about our booth. We discussed what it should look like and which safety issues should be touched upon. It was decided that we would prepare display boards, produce a video, and order brochures, stickers, coloring books and posters to use for our booth.

In the weeks before the fair, we designed and constructed our display and made a video in the home of one of our students. In the video, the students point out potential dangers in the home and suggest ways of fixing the problems. Cue cards were used so that the students would be more confident in speaking before the camera. The resulting video was short (about 4 minutes), but effective. We borrowed a continuous play TV from the library to use on the day of the fair.

Fun at the fair

Participation in the health and safety fair was gratifying for our students. They were able to practice their English as they handed out flyers and answered questions. Their Spanish came in handy too, as this is a highly Hispanic community. Since ours is a family literacy program, in addition to giving out brochures, coloring books and stickers related to health and safety, we also sponsored a reading corner. Our students read books to the young children attending the fair. The students felt good about serving their community and seeing their plans come to fruition.

Reflecting on the project

There are a few things that our staff might do differently if we were to do a similar project in the future. We would try to give our students more ownership of the project; for example, by having them choose a leader who would direct the work. The staff role would then be in an advisory capacity. Also, for the reading corner we would make an effort to find more children's titles on the topic of health and safety.

Again, the students were happy about their participation in the health and safety fair. Our hope is that our students might adopt another community service project next year and that it might expand to include our Beginning ESL class. ➤

Students answer questions about home safety at the community health and safety fair.



Conversation: Information charts

These three simple charts are great for beginning and intermediate students. Classmates interview each other by asking the provided questions, and then must record the answers on the chart. This is a great way for students to get acquainted while practicing speaking and listening to English.

Adapting to your students

Teachers can create charts like the ones shown here, customizing them to be relevant to the unit the class is studying. You can also adapt the questions to your students' level. For example, beginning students could work on fewer questions in one session. Advanced students can work on more questions, or

they can record record answers that go beyond a yes/no response.

How to do it

If a photocopy machine is not available, the teacher can write the questions on the board and have the students copy them on their own sheets of paper. Once every student has a chart, they can walk around the room interviewing each other.

It is important that students get the opportunity to speak English. They must use the language in order to retain the information they've learned.

Have fun creating your own charts, and be sure to share them with other teachers! ➡

by **Sally O'Dwyer**,
ESL Coordinator at
Hogar Hispano, Catho-
lic Charities in Falls
Church, Virginia. The
program's website is at
www.ccda.net

#1

Interview Question: "Do you..."	Name:	Name:	Name:	Name:
Do you read the newspaper in English?				
Do you watch TV shows in English?				
Do you speak English outside of class?				
Do you study English at home?				
Do you think English is easy?				

#2

Interview Question: "Can you..."	Name:	Name:	Name:	Name:
Can you drive a car?				
Can you drive a motorcycle?				
Can you use a computer?				
Can you sing?				
Can you cook?				
Can you grow plants?				
Can you speak Spanish?				
Can you speak English?				

#3

Interview Question: "How often..."	Name:	Name:	Name:	Name:
How often do you go to the movies?				
How often do you go to the grocery store?				
How often do you go to the doctor's office?				
How often do you go to work?				
How often do you go to English class?				

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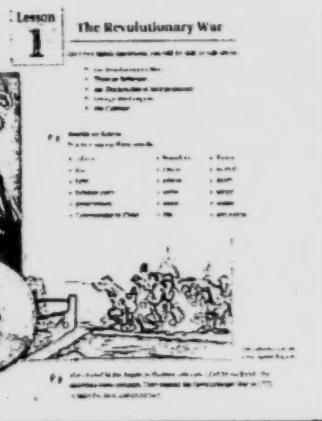
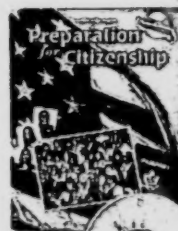
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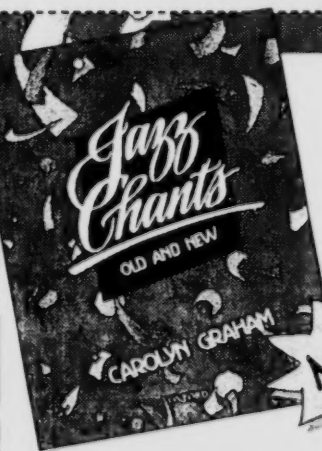


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News & notes

In past issues

Too hot? Your students might like the puzzle "Keeping cool in the summer" in Vol. 9, No. 2 of *Hands-on English*. Thinking about fall? Your students might be interested in learning about the U.S. school system. We published a reading passage, discussion questions, crossword puzzle and teaching tips on this topic in Vol. 3, No. 5.

Do your students know some strategies for learning and practicing English? During summer programs, which are often more low-key than the rest of the year, students can reflect on their learning and discuss strategies. For a starting point, try our multi-level crossword, "Language learning," plus a fun vocabulary exercise, in Vol. 5, No. 5. ➡



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Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

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Sorry about that!

A conversation activity

In our last issue, a reader asked us for ideas on teaching about apologies. We were pleased to hear from Marilyn Kwitkin, adult ESL instructor at the Nassau Tech Adult Learning Center on Long Island, New York, with this useful activity. She writes:

"When I teach apologies to my ESL classes, I have each student privately identify a mistake that he or she (or a relative or friend) has made. Then I give a small piece of paper (about half an index card in size, because I want to stress that I am not looking for major mistakes in life) to each student.

"The students write their mistakes on the paper. I walk around the classroom and read each student's mistake to correct any major errors in spelling or grammar, thus insuring that the other students in the class will be able to understand the text.

"Then, I collect the mistakes and put them in a paper bag. Each student randomly picks a mistake and has to role play an appropriate apology with a partner. We mix the cards and draw again, so each student pair has several opportunities to make and receive an apology.

"At the end, any group that wants to role play their apology for the class is welcome to do so."

Examples

Some phrases you might want to practice with your students include:

I'm sorry

I'm really sorry! or I'm very sorry!

It won't happen again.

I'd like to apologize.

Will you forgive me?

You can decide to introduce fewer (or more) phrases depending on the level of your students.

In case you need a few extra examples of 'mistakes' to keep the activity moving, here are some you can add to the pot:

I forgot my brother's birthday.

I forgot to bring my homework to class.

I spilled some coffee on the table.

I was late to class today.

I was driving too fast and a police officer stopped me.

Follow up

Writing down some of these student-made conversations for the everyone to copy will help to reinforce the lesson, and will be especially important for beginning level students.

Why it works

Marilyn reports, "The students enjoy this activity. It involves all the skill areas—writing, reading, speaking and listening." This is an easy-to-prepare lesson that you'll certainly want to add to your 'idea file'.



Happy teaching! —the Editor. 

Hands-on English

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About the publication

We're starting our second decade! *Hands-on English* has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

The articles and ideas in HOE come from experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have a lesson or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?

Our subscribers work with ESL students in a wide range of programs, including: Refugee programs, Literacy programs, Community colleges, Colleges and universities, Correctional facilities, Resource centers, **Adult Education programs**, Volunteer tutoring, Intensive ESL programs, Teacher training programs, Religious organizations, Worker's unions, Community Education programs, Secondary schools, Workplace education, Language institutes, Libraries . . . and more!

What do our readers have in common? They are dedicated, they are working under sometimes difficult conditions, and they are looking for practical, adult level materials that will help their students learn English.

Advertising

Only three percent of our income comes from advertising. Our editorial decisions are independent. ➡



Your editor, Anna Silliman, is never too busy to talk with a subscriber!

H.O.E. online

Hands-on English has more on the Web! You can find us at:

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You'll find **current events activities** ready to use, a detailed index of all our back issues, a calendar of ESL events and more useful stuff!

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Letters

... & cards,
emails,
calls,
rumors,
etc.

Student stories?

"Excellent resource! We use [Hands-on English] with several levels of students. Suggestion: If space allows, have some very simple stories of refugee experiences. Thanks!"

—Bobby King, Newcomer's Network
Clarkston, Georgia

Editor's note—This is a nice idea and could be very interesting to our readers and their students. Please do contact us if your students have short writings they'd like to share, although keep in mind space is limited. Thanks.

Another outlet and source for student writings is *TOPICS Magazine*, a lovely online magazine for ESL students. Go to: www.rice.edu/projects/topics/Electronic/Magazine.html

Listening/speaking activities?

"I tutor a low beginner one-on-one through a volunteer program. She has little opportunity to use English. Her greatest difficulty lies in understanding oral English. I would love some suggestions about activities to promote this."

—Jane Shannon, Devon, Pennsylvania

Editor's note: She's lucky to have a tutor to speak with, as this is one big step in the right direction! Several readers have contacted us recently who are looking for conversation activities, especially for lower levels. What strategies, ideas or resources can our readers suggest?

Timing problems

One complaint that some of our readers have is that their issue arrives late. In theory, your issue is supposed to arrive by the end of the first month in the cycle. That is, the September/October issue *should* arrive by the end of September. (Some subscribers don't realize this is the plan and expect to see it at the start of the month.)

In practice, though, because we send the issue by bulk mail (to save costs and to prevent raising our prices), occasionally there are unacceptable delays. We hope you will let us know if that is the case for you. We do have a few customers for whom bulk mail does not seem to get delivered in a

timely way or at all—when we know about this we can have our postmaster check into it, and we can send the issue by first-class mail if necessary.

Recently we have grown large enough to take our mailings to a mailing service, which is barcoding the addresses and sending them by automated rate. In principle, this should speed up delivery for most people!

Behind the scenes we will keep trying to move our deadlines back a bit so that mailings go out earlier—this is proving difficult to do, but we're working on it. Please keep in touch and let us know if we can do anything to help you. Thanks!

—Anna Silliman, Editor

Hints & tips

Intonation/inflection

Linda Phipps does a number of exercises with her students to help them with sentence intonation. This can have as much effect as correct pronunciation in making the students' speech clearly understood by others, and it can help their listening comprehension too. Here's what she does:

"Have a pile of sentence cards and a pile of punctuation cards (".", "?", "!", " "). Students draw one of each and read the sentence with the proper voice inflection. The sentences need to be such that the punctuation can be a period, question mark or an exclamation point. For example: It's raining. It's raining? It's raining! You forgot your wallet. You forgot your wallet? You forgot your wallet! Really. Really? Really! etc."

More tips?

ESL tips can provide just the right amount of inspiration at the right time. We love them! See our "40 tips" article, free on our website! Our next favorite article is "ABC's for Tutors: 26 Teaching Tips" by Shirley Brod. This is available online at www.springinstitute.com/elt —click on Free Resources. For some succinct and useful tips on classroom dynamics, see "75 ESL Teaching Ideas" by Hall Houston, at: www.aitech.ac.jp/~iteslj/Techniques/Houston-TeachingIdeas.html

As always, if you have tips, HOE would love to hear from you! 

Multi-level dictation: Football season

Here is another of our popular multi-level dictations, on a seasonal topic with some cultural significance!

Discussion

Ask the students to tell you what they already know about American football. Have they ever attended a game, or watched one on TV? What were their impressions?

Many Americans enjoy football as a spectator sport and social event. Share with the students any anecdotes you have about friends and family who enjoy football. What do they do on game day? What kinds of activities do fans participate in? (Booster clubs, tailgate parties, sports bars, get-togethers at home, etc.) Show the students some examples of paraphernalia that fans like to collect: shirts, flags, signs, keychains, photos, etc.

How to do it

Separate the three levels on the next page, enlarge each one and make plenty of copies. Students often like to repeat this exercise at different levels, so you may want to have extras ready.

Football season

Football is a very popular sport in the U.S. Almost every high school has a football team. Students and parents often go to high school football games on Friday nights.

If there is a college or university nearby, people can buy a ticket to see a football game on Saturday. In some cities there is also a professional football team. Many people watch these football games on T.V.

Football fans sometimes invite friends to their home to watch a game. They enjoy eating, drinking and cheering their team. Some fans wear a shirt with the name and colors of their favorite team.

You can see football games starting in September. This season is usually called fall, or autumn, but most football fans call it "football season."

Discussion

1. Have you ever seen a football game? Are you a football fan?
2. Some people say football is too dangerous. What do you think?
3. What other sports are popular in the U.S.?
4. What sports do you like?

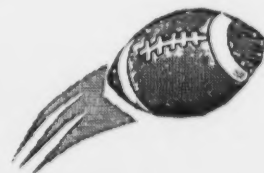
Read the dictation at natural speed, pausing between sentences so that students can write. When they are finished, pair up lower and higher level students to correct their texts. Note that the lower levels have more complete information, so they can assist the higher levels!

Follow up

- Reading/scanning—Have students search the newspaper for the names of: 1) high school football teams 2) college or university teams and 3) professional teams and write these names on a list by category.
- Speaking—Have the students simulate a phone call, inviting another student to watch a sports event on TV.
- Interview—Ask the students to interview friends, neighbors or co-workers about football. Questions can include: Are you a football fan? What is your favorite team? Students then report back to the class what they discovered.
- Writing—Have students choose another sport and write something about its fans. What do they like to do on game day? How do they support their team? ➡

For literacy-level students, if you supply them with a word list they can succeed at 'Level A'. Students look at the list, choose the correct word and copy it into each blank space.

buy, eating, fall, football, Friday, friends, name, parents, Saturday, school, September, shirt, TV, U.S.



Here is the full text for reading and dictation. It is 11 sentences (126 words).

Vocabulary needed:
*sport, game, team, ticket, fans; cheer.
high school, college, university, professional.*



Football season—Level A

Football is a very popular sport in the _____. Almost every high _____ has a football team. Students and _____ often go to high school football games on _____ nights.

If there is a college or university nearby, people can _____ a ticket to see a football game on _____. In some cities there is also a professional _____ team. Many people watch these football games on _____.

Football fans sometimes invite _____ to their home to watch a game. They enjoy _____, drinking and cheering their team. Some fans wear a _____ with the _____ and colors of their favorite team.

You can see football games starting in _____. This season is usually called _____, or autumn, but most football fans call it "football season."

Football season—Level B

Football is a _____ popular sport _____. Almost every _____ has a football _____. _____ and parents often _____ high school _____ on Friday nights.

If there is a college or university nearby, people _____ to see a football game _____. In some cities _____ also a professional _____ team. _____ these football games _____.

_____ fans sometimes _____ friends _____ to watch a game. They enjoy _____, _____ and _____ their team. Some fans wear a shirt _____ and colors _____ their _____ team.

_____ football games starting _____ September. This _____ is usually called fall, or autumn, but most football _____ call it "_____."

Football season—Level C

Football _____ in the U.S. Almost _____ a football team. Students and parents often _____ on Friday nights.

If there is a college _____ nearby, _____ to see a football game on Saturday. _____ there is also a professional _____. Many people _____ on T.V.

Football fans sometimes _____ to _____ a game. _____ eating, drinking and cheering _____. Some fans _____ with the name and colors _____.

You can _____ This season _____ fall, or autumn, but _____ "football season."

Football season—Level D

(Try writing the dictation on a blank piece of paper!)

From the field: Dealing with bank accounts

My students in high-intermediate ESL have usually opened checking accounts or obtained credit cards. However, few are aware of the different types of bank accounts available to them, and many may not understand why interest charges or penalty fees appear on their banking or credit card statements.

To expand my students' financial awareness, I have developed a mini-unit on spending and saving that you could easily adapt for higher or lower levels. An added benefit of this integrated-skills unit is that students with sharp math skills who might usually be silent in class can help the other students in understanding concepts or calculations.

Introducing the concepts

To my students' delight, I tell them that we are going to spend the next two classes talking about money. Explaining that we are going to read information from the bank, I introduce the following key words:

- interest rate
- service charge
- checking account
- penalty fee
- minimum balance
- withdrawal

I tell students that I am going to read them a dictation about these words. For this exercise, I use the dictation as a listening comprehension tool; it gives students practice hearing and deciphering unfamiliar words. However, if you are teaching lower-level classes, you may prefer to explain the terms individually and use the dictation as a follow-up cloze reading exercise, with keywords omitted so that students must add them in the appropriate places.

I read the dictation three times (see next page), with students listening without writing the first time. After we have corrected the dictation, I elicit meanings of the key words from students and discuss other terms from the dictation such as 'stocks or bonds.'

Real-life reading practice

Next, I place the students in pairs or small groups and give them bank brochures. Usually the brochures have a chart comparing the different types of accounts. I may

give the students the actual brochures, or I may just photocopy the pages with the comparative charts.

I preface the reading activity by emphasizing that the students don't need to understand every word on the chart; rather they need to look for the key words we discussed. Then I give each pair or group a list of short-answer questions about the brochure charts.

Sample questions for checking accounts:

- Do you earn interest on a personal checking account?
- Which accounts require a minimum balance?
- Which accounts let you write as many checks as you want?

Sample questions for savings and investment accounts:

- Which accounts do not have a monthly service charge?
- Can you use an ATM card with a savings account?
- Can you write checks with a money market account?

After the students have reported their answers to the full group, you may want to discuss some real-life scenarios and ask students for their opinions. For example, ask: "You want to save money to buy a house in a year or two. What kind of bank account would you choose?"

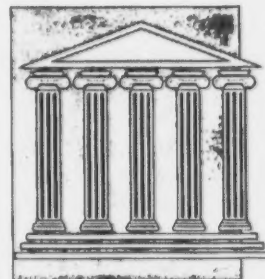
Question practice

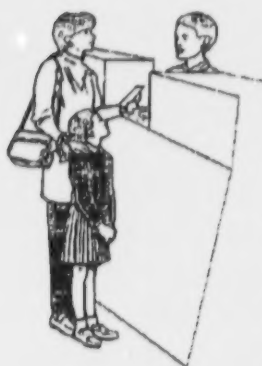
In the next part of this mini-unit, I move the focus from reading to speaking. I usually begin this at the start of the next class. As students file in, they see the following phrases on the board:

- "It's 2.5 percent."
- "Yes. You must have at least \$500 in the account at all times."
- "You're allowed four withdrawals."
- "The penalty fee is \$50."
- "No, there isn't."
- "Yes, you can."

by **Betsy Lindeman**,
ESL instructor in the Alexandria, Virginia Community Education Program.

Editor's note: To do this activity, you'll need to gather some real bank brochures for the students to study. You may want to visit a couple of banks and choose the brochure that has the most complete information about each kind of account available.





In the full group, we practice asking questions for these answers, reviewing terms as necessary. Then I give half the class large cards or sheets of paper with large-type key words and phrases such as "checks per month," "interest rate," and "minimum balance." Everyone stands up and circulates throughout the room; students with the cards must stop in front of students without them, show their cards; and prompt the other students to ask questions about the key words (e.g., "What is the interest rate for a money market account?") For lower levels, you may want to use cards with partial question prompts (e.g., "How many checks per month ____ write?")

Extension activity: Credit cards

I usually move from banking practices to credit card practices. A fun way to start this is with an open-ended question, guaranteed to spark a lively discussion, like: "Do people use credit cards the same way in your country?"

Next, I ask students to explain how they pay for something they buy with a credit card and when they should send payment. We talk about the concept of sending in the bill before the due date; I always find students who didn't know this was allowed.

To familiarize students with the concept of finance charges, I give them a few problems to solve, like this one:

"You buy a computer for \$1,500. The interest rate on your account is 12 percent. If you wait for a year to pay for the computer, how much interest do you pay the credit card company?"

I end the unit by having students think about spending practices in general. I read or distribute to students a short advice-column letter from a compulsive shopper who has maxed out credit cards and seeks advice on how to control the spending problem. After a brief review of modals ("You should. . ."), I have students discuss the letter in small groups. Each group then reports its advice to the full group. As a follow-up activity, students can write letters with advice to the compulsive shopper.

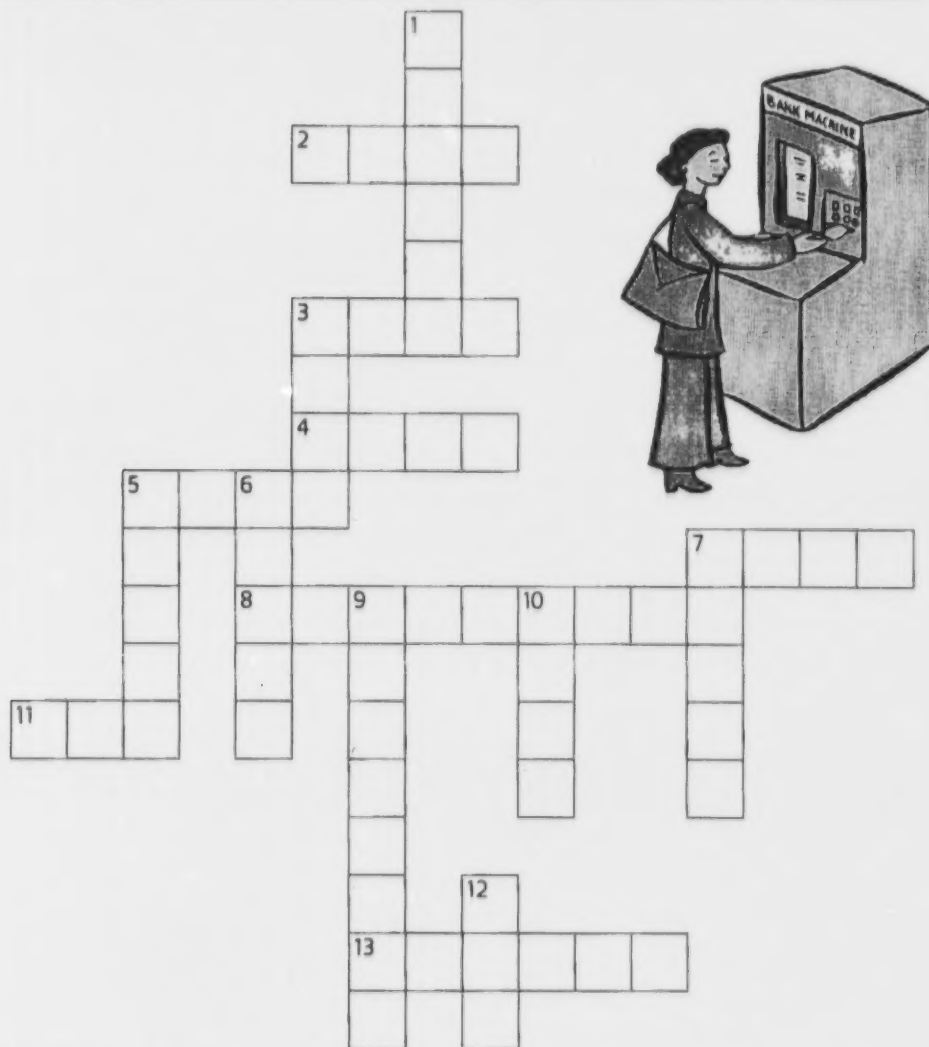
Final thoughts

Many students have thanked me for covering these financial topics in class. The topic of money is one of the few that seems to engage everyone. Because the activities involve all four skills as well as question formation and modals, they help students practice essential language components as they are acquiring important content knowledge. ➡

Text for dictation:

There are many different types of bank accounts. In most checking accounts, you have to keep a minimum balance or you must pay a penalty fee. A savings account allows you to earn interest on the money you deposit. A money market account has a higher interest rate than a savings account. The bank invests your money in stocks or bonds. However, you are limited to a certain number of withdrawals each month. An individual retirement account (IRA) is a long-term savings account. You save this money until you are old enough to retire, or you must pay a lot of taxes on it.

Multi-level crossword puzzle: Money



Word list

bill
card
cash
cents
change
check
cost
dollar
expensive
money
much
pay
paycheck
sale
save
tax

Level B (harder)

Across clues

2. You receive this in the mail when you owe some money.
3. Some people use this to pay instead of a check.
4. When an item is on _____, the price is lower.
5. How _____ does it cost?
7. This word means the same as "price".
8. If it costs a lot of money, it's _____.
11. You have to _____ your telephone bill every month.

Down clues

1. "\$" is a _____ sign.
3. You can get _____ from a machine if you have an ATM card.
5. Dollars, pesos, rubles and yen are all _____.
6. A paper that is the same as money.
7. Part of a dollar.
9. You earn this by working at your job.
10. This word is the opposite of "spend".
12. This is usually 5 or 6% of the price of an item.
13. You pay for something, and the cashier gives you some money back. It's your _____.

Note to instructors:

This puzzle has two different sets of clues. have the students decide which level they would like to try. Students who succeed at Level A may wish to try again with Level B.

Provide the word list only if the students need some extra help. ➔

Level A (easier)

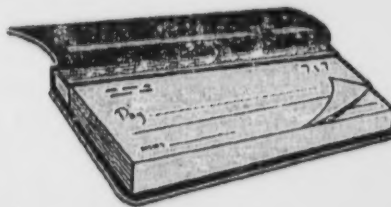
Across clues

2. "Why is our electric _____ so high this month?"
"It's because of the air conditioner."
3. Salesclerk: "Are you paying by cash, check or credit _____?"
Customer: "I'll write a check."
4. Student 1: "Do you want to come with us on Saturday? We're going to a garage _____ to look for furniture."
Student 2: "Sure!"
5. Maria: "My brother wants to sell his car for \$2,000."
Jim: "I think that's too _____. It's an old car."
7. Customer: "How much does this shirt _____?"
Salesclerk: "All the shirts are \$19.95 on sale."
8. "Do you like that apartment?"
"Yes, but it's too _____. I'm looking for something cheaper."
11. This week the rent is due, and also the telephone bill and the electric bill. I have a lot of bills to _____!
13. Cashier: "That will be \$19.65."
Customer: "Here is \$20."
Cashier: "Thank you. Your _____ is 35 cents."

Down clues

1. Cashier: "Here's your change. It's one _____ and seventy-six cents."
Customer: "Thank you."
3. Student 1: "Where are you going?"
Student 2: "To the bank. I'm going to _____ my paycheck."
5. Brother: "Can you lend me some _____?"
Sister: "Sorry, not until payday."
6. Husband: "Did you pay the telephone bill?"
Wife: "Yes, I wrote a _____ and sent it yesterday."
7. Cashier: "That will be 49 dollars and 72 _____."
Customer: "Can I write you a check?"
Cashier: "Yes, if you have some ID."
9. I worked overtime last month, so I will get a big _____ this time.
10. Mr. and Mrs. Wu want to buy a house. Every month, they _____ some money for this.
12. Customer: "How much is this book?"
Salesclerk: "It's \$25, plus _____. The total is \$26.50."

Cash, check or credit card?



Minigrant report: ESL guide to London, KY

Most of the students in our ESL program are from Japan. We currently also have a student from Romania and two students from Russia. We decided to do this particular project because we learned we would have five new Japanese families arriving.

Our idea was to plan a project that would help acclimate our new families to our community. Our students, as well as our instructors, remembered how confusing and difficult it was for new families to arrive here with varying degrees of knowledge about the language and customs. Making it even more difficult is the fact that our community is not culturally diverse, and there is sometimes little patience or understanding for other cultures.

Dual purpose

We came up with the idea for a handbook and a scavenger hunt because it would help us with two major concerns. Aside from acquainting our new families with the community, we were looking for ways to include more writing in our curriculum for our current students. With enthusiasm, our ESL students created and wrote our handbook, "How To Survive in London, KY."

After the group decided what topics and information to include in the handbook, the students worked in pairs to write each section. The sections included information about ESL classes, using the telephone, paying for something by check, things to do in London (shopping, recreation, restaurants), how to order pizza on the telephone, using the post office, visiting the doctor, ordering meat at the grocery store and returning something. The students included not only details on where to go but also pointers on what to say and how to say it.

Upon completion of each section, the instructors and students went over it together to correct usage and grammar. Finally, each section was presented to the rest of the group for approval. Our Japanese students translated each page into their language, and we included the pages side-by-side in the handbook. The Romanian and Russian students are currently working on versions in their languages.

Going hunting

Now for part two! On January 26th we gathered for our scavenger hunt. Students were separated into groups, each with a new student and an experienced student. Everyone was armed with a copy of our 34-page handbook, a map of the city of London and money to make a few purchases. Each group had two hours to complete ten assignments, mostly items covered in the handbook. We would meet afterward to share experiences and have lunch together.

Our students have made us aware that using the telephone was, and still is, challenging and sometimes even frightening for ESL students. Using the telephone was one of the first suggestions they had when we wrote the handbook. In order to include this in the scavenger hunt, each group had to use the telephone to invite a guest to have lunch with us after the scavenger hunt. One group was given the daunting task of ordering pizza on the telephone. (They were not aware that the pizza restaurant was briefed beforehand!)

The major purchases were used to put together a very casual luncheon after the scavenger hunt. With the exception of a couple of staff contributions, the students

by *Kathy Usery*,
ESL Instructor at the
Laurel County Adult
Education and Literacy
program in London,
Kentucky. Her project won
a Hands-on English
Minigrant award in 2000.

Kathy's students compiled and wrote a guide to their city for new arrivals, then organized a scavenger hunt activity to introduce the newcomers to the area.

As you'll see, it was a great experience not only for the students but for members of the community as well.

Success! Following instructions in the guidebook, this student ordered pizza for the group on the telephone.



gathered all of the food, drink and paper products for a tasty meal held with most of our staff and all of our successful scavenger hunters.

We think the project was a great success! Our new students had a chance to learn a little bit about our community in a non-threatening manner, and our experienced students were able to share their knowledge about the community and practice their speaking and writing skills.

Possibly of equal importance, our community became better acquainted with our ESL students. We hope that enlisting their cooperation has made them more sympathetic to the needs and feelings of people coming to our community from countries and cultures far from Southeastern Kentucky. ☞

Right: Other students complete their assigned tasks in the community.



Here is the list of tasks the students had to complete on their scavenger hunt. Notice that it includes both items with survival value (i.e., post office) and ones with entertainment value (i.e., movie theater). The list is interesting, appealing and informative, and gives students a taste of local culture without being overwhelming.

About our Minigrants
Hands-on English
awards a few small Minigrants for student projects each year. You can read more details about the program on our website. Next year's deadline for applying is June 30th.

ESL Scavenger Hunt

Here is your challenge—With your team, you need to collect as many of the following items as possible and return back to Kathy's by 12:30 pm. The rules—Your team needs to stay together. And, have fun!

- _____ One member of your group will make a phone call, either to order the pizza for lunch or to the office to invite other staff members over for lunch. (Kathy will let you know who your group has to call.)
- _____ Go to Finley's Fun Center and write down what their hours of operation are on Saturdays.
- _____ Purchase a post card from one of the following stores: Jay's Hallmark, Books Cards & Gifts, Dog Patch Trading Post, Wal-Mart. Try to find a post card that has a picture of something that has to do with Kentucky.
- _____ Go to the Travel Bureau office (located on the corner of I-75 and Highway 80). Inside, pick up a brochure for one of the Kentucky State Parks that you might want to visit in the future.
- _____ Buy one of London's local newspapers (either the News Journal or the Sentinel Echo) and write down where you purchased it.
- _____ Go to the Regency Cinema Seven Theater and write down what movies are currently playing.
- _____ At the main library in downtown London, ask at the counter for a list of their hours of operation and for a library card application for anyone in your group who does not have a library card.
- _____ From Krogers purchase the following for our lunch: (different items listed for each group)
- _____ At one of the McDonald's restaurants, purchase an apple pie and bring back the container it was in (you may eat the pie).
- _____ Go to the post office and purchase a stamp for the post card you bought earlier. You may decide to either send the card to someone in the U.S. or elsewhere.

Tools & techniques: Teddy Bear English

Recycling for ESL

It began when my wife cleaned out the nursery. She discovered nearly twenty stuffed animals (mostly little Teddy bears) that needed new homes. They were hidden in the back of the van, lest they be rescued by a four-year old who might think she still needed a multitude of such critters.

Before they could be either discovered or contributed to Goodwill, an idea was born during the drive to school. As a result, eighteen adult ESL learners ended up taking home stuffed animals that day as an English lesson.

Here's how we did it. Each student, with closed eyes, reached into a big bag and randomly picked their "assignment." The delighted laughter and banter revealed a remnant of childhood in everyone. Then the students were given 15 minutes to create an "identity" for their new friend.

The students were told that their toy was really a student from another country coming to live with them for a while. Their job was to get to know this new friend and to introduce him or her to the rest of the class.

"Let me introduce. . ."

The introductions were remarkable, even for this advanced level class. We met "Pencil" the dancing bear from Russia, "Ichiro," who escaped from naughty children in Tokyo, "Stefan," a very organized, teetotaling computer scientist from Ukraine, and "Red," the charming 1st grader from Korea, among others. These new friends were then sent home with the students who were given the task of getting to know them and their life-story, to be presented at the next class.

At the following class every student and visitor returned, some with elaborate tales. Even the retired Taiwanese gentleman came

fondly clutching his little stuffed puppy as a new family friend. All were sent home again with one more assignment: for the visitor to describe in writing a week in the life of the host family before saying goodbye at our next class.

At the end of the experience, there were some sad goodbyes. But now those little stuffed ambassadors are looking forward to meeting some new host families in the coming year.

Postscript

Though used for an advanced class, this exercise could well be useful for vocabulary-building, imaginary dialogues (stuffed animal-to-people, stuffed animal-to-stuffed animal), writing exercises, etc. at a variety of levels. It is a tool that both comforts and stimulates ESL learners. ➡



A Teddy bear exercise for adult students?? No, we're not crazy. This teacher describes how a different kind of assignment brought humor into the classroom and gave a creative start to speaking and writing activities.

*by Merrill Morse,
teacher at Roseville Adult
High School / Community
Education in Roseville,
Minnesota.*

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- ✓ Receive advice and technical assistance on instructional methods, curricula, and assessment
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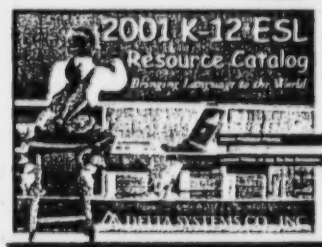
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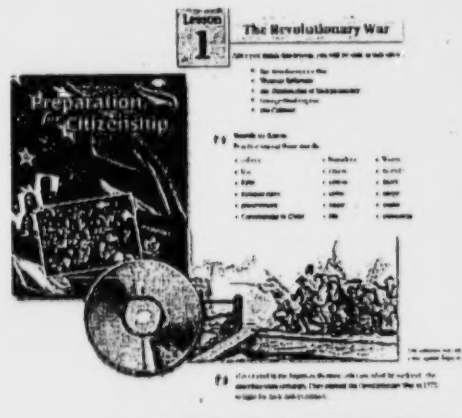
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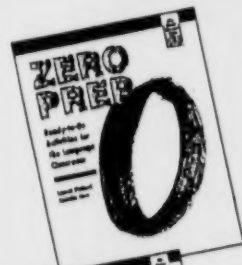
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News & notes

In past issues

Looking for more seasonal activities? Now that autumn is here a good choice is our multi-level puzzle from last year, "Changes for fall" in Vol. 10, No. 3. along with fall vocabulary and listening activities.

The last three months of the year are crowded with holidays, events and special occasions, and this kind of cultural information is always of interest to students. Linda Phipps explains her customized, teacher-created "Events of the month" board game in Vol. 10, No. 2. If you include historical events as she does, this low-key game makes a nice review of citizenship material, too.

What's the best way to learn English? To get your new students off to a good start, how about discussing learning strategies with them? There's a reading and multi-level dictation entitled "How to learn English" in Vol. 9, No 3. that will give them tips and spark discussion.

Finally, in this issue we have a crossword puzzle about money that is about right for beginning/high beginning students. If you're looking for something slightly more challenging, try the puzzle "Paying for things" in Vol. 9, No. 1. ➡



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Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

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Knowing your students

These days there is something of a dilemma for ESL teachers—how much should current events and concerns come into the lesson?

Usually language teachers like to take advantage of any topic that motivates the students and generates conversation and language practice. That is why ESL classrooms are so interesting. For many students, the chance to ask questions, learn vocabulary and discuss their ideas about what's happening in the news now is not only educational but also quite a comfort. Sharing their thoughts and concerns with other students is a necessary and helpful way of making a connection, just as it is for most of us.

We are reminded though, by a publication from the Spring Institute, *Tips for Teachers During Times of Trauma*, that for refugees who have experienced trauma in other countries the recent events here can re-traumatize them or create great distress. (See this article at www.springinstitute.com/elt) For such students especially, dwelling on stories of loss is not helpful and may actually be distracting rather than educational.

We have heard from instructors of mainstream university courses that this semester has been extremely difficult for teaching. American students are finding it hard to concentrate on their work; they are getting lower scores on exams as a result. The reason seems to be that they are watching a lot more TV, they are very stressed out about rapidly unfolding events, and they are worried about the future.

For these students emotions are running high—some may be wondering if they'll be drafted. The question we heard raised by one of their professors is: Wouldn't it be better for these students to buckle down and work hard on their school work? This was not meant to be unsympathetic. Tackling a chore and doing something proactive is one way to get through a difficult time; there may be something to be said for traditional class work in times of crisis.

Acknowledging your students' concerns is a good idea. Whether you bring these issues into the ESL classroom as teaching material, though, will depend on your students. It has to be up to individual teachers to know their students well enough to decide which topics are appropriate and which are time-wasters. You also have to know the difference in your students between voicing concerns (a legitimate classroom exercise) and dwelling on fears (which is outside the sphere of education). We can't offer you any guideline for deciding this.

Knowing your students well is the key to good teaching, which is why we can't ever be replaced by technology.

In our next issue: Connecting to community?

Speaking of getting to work, we've heard some inspiring ideas of projects that ESL teachers are working on to help connect their students with the local community. If you know of some activities or have some ideas about how to do this, please let us know! We will pass these along to you in our next issue.

Happy teaching! —the Editor. 

Hands-on English

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About the publication

We're in our second decade! *Hands-on English* has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

The articles and ideas in HOE come from experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have a lesson or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?

Our subscribers work with ESL students in a wide range of programs, including: Refugee programs, Literacy programs, Community colleges, Colleges and universities, Correctional facilities, Resource centers, **Adult Education programs**, Volunteer tutoring, Intensive ESL programs, Teacher training programs, Religious organizations, Worker's unions, Community Education programs, Secondary schools, Workplace education, Language institutes, Libraries . . . and more!

What do our readers have in common? They are dedicated, they are working under sometimes difficult conditions, and they are looking for practical, adult level materials that will help their students learn English.

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Your editor, Anna Silliman, is never too busy to talk with a subscriber!

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11-4

Letters

...& cards,
emails,
calls,
rumors,
etc.

September 11th

In September we posted a discussion activity on our website, "What we lost; what we'll always have." We heard from a number of teachers that this provided an appropriate way for them to discuss the recent tragic events with their students. Here are some of their comments:

"The teachers and I are so grateful for the photos and teaching suggestions. We had planned a discussion, and this was just exactly right. In the higher level groups, it certainly generated a lot of questions and vocabulary. During the next class, they will write about it and I'm looking forward to seeing what they say. Thank you so much for a timely teacher aid."

—Eileen Rehg
Dayton, Ohio

"Just when we needed something, you came up with the absolute perfect activity to help explain this terrible tragedy. Our towns in Bergen County, New Jersey are in sight of the NYC skyline and it is horrible for us to see it now. Many of our towns lost residents in the towers and we are all deeply affected. Thanks for the wonderful pictures and the suggested activity."

—Nikki Dietel, LVA of Pascack Valley
Westwood Public Library, Westwood, NJ

A site visit

One of our long-time subscribers in Brooklyn, Sharon Borakove, recently attended an event at the Literacy Action Center in downtown Manhattan. For the first time since the tragedy she saw the World Trade Center site. She sent us this report:

"The first thing that hit me when I walked out of the subway was the smell. It's not a burning smell, but a musty kind of odor. . . The disaster area is enormous. It's surrounded by a barricade, fortified by police. However, the barricade is not very high, and passers-by can easily see down the blocks and over it.

"The area has thus become a tourist mecca. People from all over the world come to get a glimpse and snap pictures. On each corner of Broadway, where the barricade is located (about 3 blocks from the site) you see

a different view of the disaster. On one particular block I saw the remains of the three floors of Tower 2. Behind it was a skyscraper—I think it's an apartment complex—with an enormous sign which read, 'We will never forget.'

"There are memorials, banners from different cities and countries, good wishes from individuals, etc., posted on each barricade. I couldn't see 'ground zero,' only the remains of the buildings still standing and the smoldering fires. Again, the extent of the devastation is enormous. I walked for about 8 blocks, got tired and turned back. Also, the odor entered into my nose quickly.

"The subway station that had an entrance inside the WTC will be closed indefinitely. I went to the next closest station which reopened this week and it's a mess."

—S.B.



A Hands-on English update

Are you curious about how many other ESL instructors are reading *Hands-on English*? We have a brand new estimate for you—it's about five thousand!

Although we mail approximately 2,000 paid subscriptions, nearly 38% of those are multi-user subscriptions. Throughout the past few months we've been doing some polling of these multi-user subscribers to find out how many instructors they have. What we discovered is that at each site where we send a multi-user subscription, the average number of teachers is 5. Which means that there are a lot more readers out there than we thought!

What a wonderful network to belong to. We hope that it keeps on growing and collecting together more people who teach ESL, so that we all have a bigger pool of ideas to draw from. This will be our goal for the coming year, because. . . we need each others' help! ☺

Multi-level dictation: A student dinner

Many ESL classes or programs enjoy having a potluck-style dinner at holiday time. It's a good way to celebrate the students' hard work and progress in school. It's a chance to get together informally with new-found friends, which can help to cement a positive working relationship within the class. Most of all, it gives many students great pleasure to share something from their own culture with others. Here, we use the opportunity to make such an event into a language lesson.

Discussion

Ask the students to tell you the names of holiday foods from their country. When do they eat this? Does the food have special meaning? Is it better for children or for adults? Is it difficult or easy to make? Who knows how to make it? Is it possible to make the same food in this country? Why or why not?

If your family has some special holiday foods or customs you can share these with the students, too. For example, my mother

makes very good pumpkin pie but mine doesn't taste as good; I learned how to make turkey gravy from my grandmother, etc.

If your class is already planning a holiday dinner, have them tell you about the plans and preparations for this as a warm-up to reading this story. After reading and discussing the story, let each student decide which level of dictation to try. Pass out copies of the worksheets, then read the story at natural speed, pausing for students to write. When they have finished, let students help each other with the corrections. Then try the exercise again at another level, if they wish.

Writing follow up

- Tell the students this story is about something that happened last year. Have them re-write the story in the past, starting with "Last year, the students in my class planned. . ."
- Write about a real event that you attended. Who was there? Who prepared the food? What happened? ➔

For literacy-level students, if you supply them with a word list they can succeed at 'Level A'. Students look at the list, choose the correct word and copy it into each blank space.

Here's the word list:
buy, cake, class, cook, country, dinner, family, food, good, happy, mother, music, party, sister, students, ten.



A student dinner

The students in my class are planning a holiday dinner. We have students from ten different countries. Some students will bring special food from their country. They will share this food with the other students.

Camelia is going to make a special cake from Romania. She will buy the ingredients at a special store. She will borrow a pan from her sister-in-law. Her mother will send her some advice about how to make the cake.

Juan doesn't know what to bring. He can't cook. He lives by himself, so his family can't help. The other students had a good idea. "You can bring some music for the party," they told him. Juan is very happy with this plan.

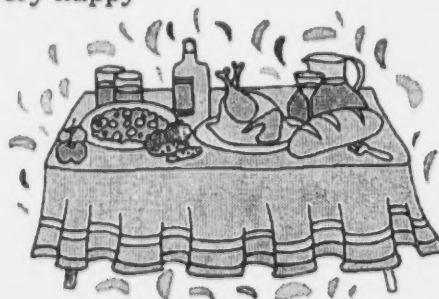
It's going to be a wonderful party.

Discussion

1. Do you know how to cook special food from your country?
2. Where can you get ingredients?
3. Who can you ask for advice about how to cook this food?

Here is the full text for reading and dictation. It is 15 sentences (125 words).

Vocabulary needed:
holiday, ingredients
share, buy, borrow, bring



A student dinner—Level A

The students in my _____ are planning a holiday _____. We have students from _____ different countries. Some _____ will bring special food from their _____. They will share this _____ with the other students.

Camelia is going to make a special _____ from Romania. She will _____ the ingredients at a special store. She will borrow a pan from her _____ -in-law. Her _____ will send her some advice about how to make the cake.

Juan doesn't know what to bring. He can't _____. He lives by himself, so his _____ can't help. The other students had a _____ idea. "You can bring some _____ for the party," they told him. Juan is very _____ with this plan.

It's going to be a wonderful _____.

A student dinner—Level B

The students _____ are planning _____. We have students _____ different _____. Some students _____ special _____ their country. They will share this food _____.

Camelia _____ a special cake _____ Romania. She _____ the ingredients at a special _____. She will borrow a pan _____. Her mother _____ about how to make _____.

Juan doesn't know _____. He _____ cook. He _____ by himself, so his family _____. _____ had a good idea. "You can _____ for the party," they told him. Juan _____ this plan.

It's _____ a wonderful party.

A student dinner—Level C

_____ in my class _____. We _____ students _____ students _____ from their country. They will share this food _____.

Camelia _____ from Romania. _____ ingredients _____. She _____ a pan _____. _____ mother _____ cake.

Juan _____ cook. He lives _____, so _____. The _____ students _____ him. Juan _____, "You can bring _____," they _____.

_____ wonderful _____.

Level D & E (See page 15 in this issue!)

Reading activity: Scanning the newspaper

Now is an appropriate time to help students get familiar with the local newspaper and the local, regional, state, national and international news they can find there. We have offered simple versions of this exercise in previous issues of *Hands-on English* (see Vol. 9, No. 1 and Vol. 9, No. 5.), but this one is more extensive and challenging, and provides a wider range of levels, including a more advanced level.

Preparation

Bring some copies of your local newspaper to class, enough so that each small group or pair of students has their own complete set. If you wish, you can just save the paper for a few days and bring in a different day's paper for each group. (For a slightly more coordinated exercise, you can buy several papers on the same day so that all the students are looking at the same paper.)

Before class, check to see if most of the topics covered here are mentioned in the papers you are bringing. Note that local papers often have a different focus each day of the week—education on Monday, food on Thursday, religion on Friday, for example. This tends to affect the advertising as well. You can add more search questions—about food, for example—if the papers you are using have a special focus.

How to do it

Have the students select which level to try or hand out the levels you think might be

appropriate. Level A may work for literacy-level students, especially with some help getting started. Or, Level A could be a quick warm-up for higher level students. Each level requires a bit more reading comprehension to complete. If the students find one level too easy, they can complete it quickly and then try a higher level.

Hand out some highlighting pens and colored sticky notes. Ask the students to mark their answers by highlighting them on the page and then also noting the page number on their worksheet. To make it easier to find the page again, they can attach a sticky note to the outside edge of the page.

Let the students take their time with this exercise—after all, the purpose is not only to find the answers but also to get comfortable using and reading the paper.

Reporting

Have each group report their answers orally to the class. This works especially well if all the groups have the same paper, as they can follow along together to check. Also, ask the students to explain their answers (i.e., why did this picture make you smile?).

Take the opportunity to discuss any parts of the paper the students are unfamiliar with. For example, what is the police blotter and why is it there? What is this information useful for? ➔

Do your students know what's available in their local or regional newspaper? This exercise is designed to give them a little reading practice while discovering a resource of possible use to them.

Extension—Once students are familiar with this exercise, you can prepare a further, more detailed version concentrating on issues and information specific to your location.



Level A

1. Find the word "U.S." 2 times.
2. Find the word "police."
3. Find the word "TV" 2 times.
4. Find the word "Free" 2 times
5. Find a picture that makes you smile.
6. Find a picture that makes you worry.
7. Find the word "car" 2 times.
8. Find the word "Weather".
9. Find the word "Movies" 2 times.
10. Find 4 pictures: a young man, an old man, a young woman and an old woman.
11. Find the word "Sports" 2 times.
12. Find a letter that someone wrote to the newspaper.
13. Find 3 jobs you can apply for.
14. Find a picture of a cell phone.

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Level B

1. Find the names of 3 countries.
2. Find the word "police" 2 times.
3. Find the TV schedule.
4. Find a coupon.
5. Find a story about something amusing.
6. Find a story about something serious.
7. Find the words "traffic" and "vehicle".
8. What is today's high temperature?
9. Find the names of 3 movies.
10. Find 3 men's names and 3 women's names.
11. Find the names of 3 kinds of sports.
12. Find a letter about a family problem.
13. Find a used computer for sale.
14. Find an ad for cell phone service.

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Level C

1. Find the names of 5 cities.
2. Find the word "gun" or "guns".
3. Find the names of 3 TV shows at 9 p.m.
4. Find an ad for something that is very expensive.
5. Find an article about families.
6. Find an article about something dangerous.
7. Find a story about a traffic accident.
8. What will tomorrow's high temperature be?
9. Find the name of a movie theater that is near your home.
10. Find the names and pictures of 2 famous people.
11. Find the names of 3 sports teams and what cities they are from.
12. Find some advice about a personal problem.
13. Find a garage sale with some furniture.
14. Find an article about technology.

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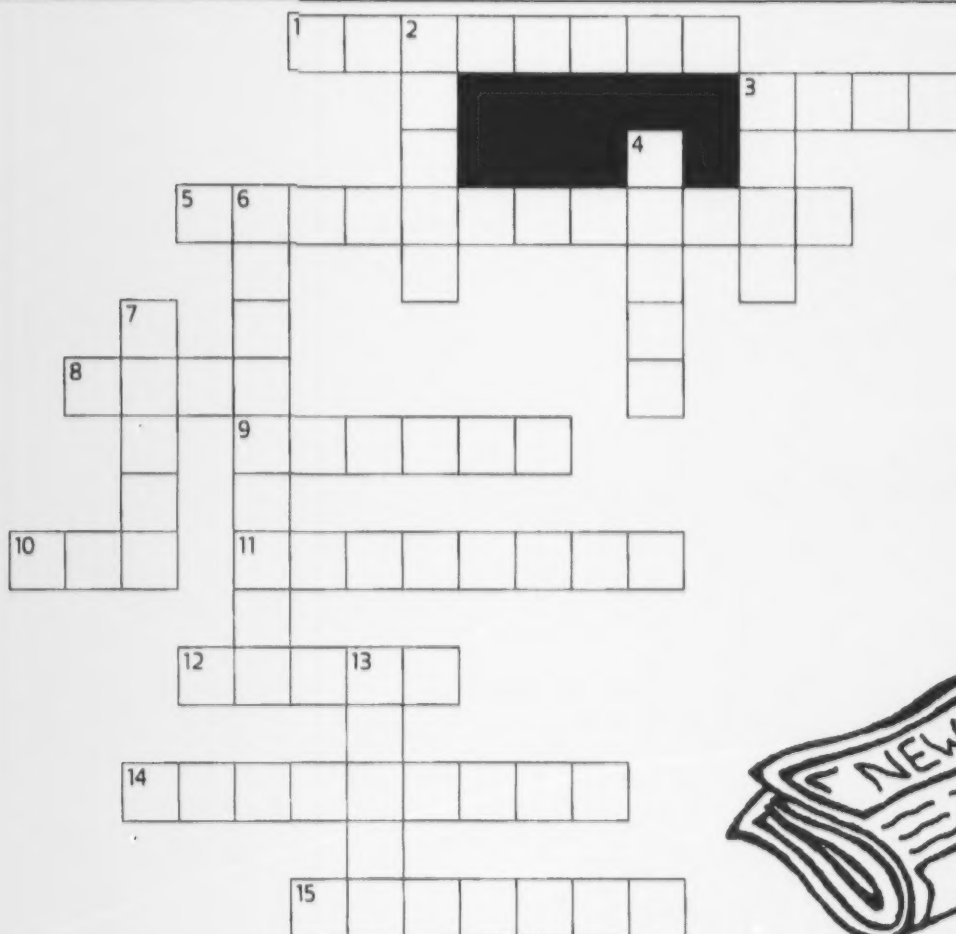


Level D

1. Find the names of 3 leaders and their countries.
2. Find a story about a crime.
3. Find out what basketball games are on TV. (which teams, what day, time and station?)
4. Find 2 ads about health or medical care.
5. Find an article about something everyone can be happy about.
6. Find an article about something everyone should worry about.
7. Find some information about fixing your car.
8. Which day has the best weather this week?
9. Find the name of a movie that is O.K. for young children.
10. Find the names of 2 politicians, 2 athletes and 2 business executives.
11. Find the final scores for 2 different sports events.
12. Find some advice about personal or family problems that you agree with.
13. What number do you call to place an ad in the Classified section?
14. Find some information about medical technology.

Pages: _____
 Page: _____
 Page: _____
 Pages: _____
 Page: _____
 Page: _____
 Page: _____
 Page: _____
 Page: _____
 Pages: _____
 Page: _____
 Page: _____
 Page: _____
 Page: _____

Multi-level crossword puzzle: Look in the newspaper



Word list

buy
countries
days
died
games
jobs
letters
money
money
newspaper
pictures
puzzle
title
tomorrow
United States
write



Level A (easier)

Across clues

1. In the "Weather" section, you can find out how cold it will be _____.
3. The weather news for the next five _____ is called a "forecast."
5. "National" news means news from all over the _____.
8. The "Classified" ad section has things for sale and many different kinds of _____.
9. Every day there is a crossword _____ in the newspaper, but it's very difficult.
10. If you want the newspaper to come to your house every day, you can _____ a subscription.
11. The "comics" are funny stories with _____ of people and animals.
12. People who want to say something in the newspaper can _____ a letter to the editor.

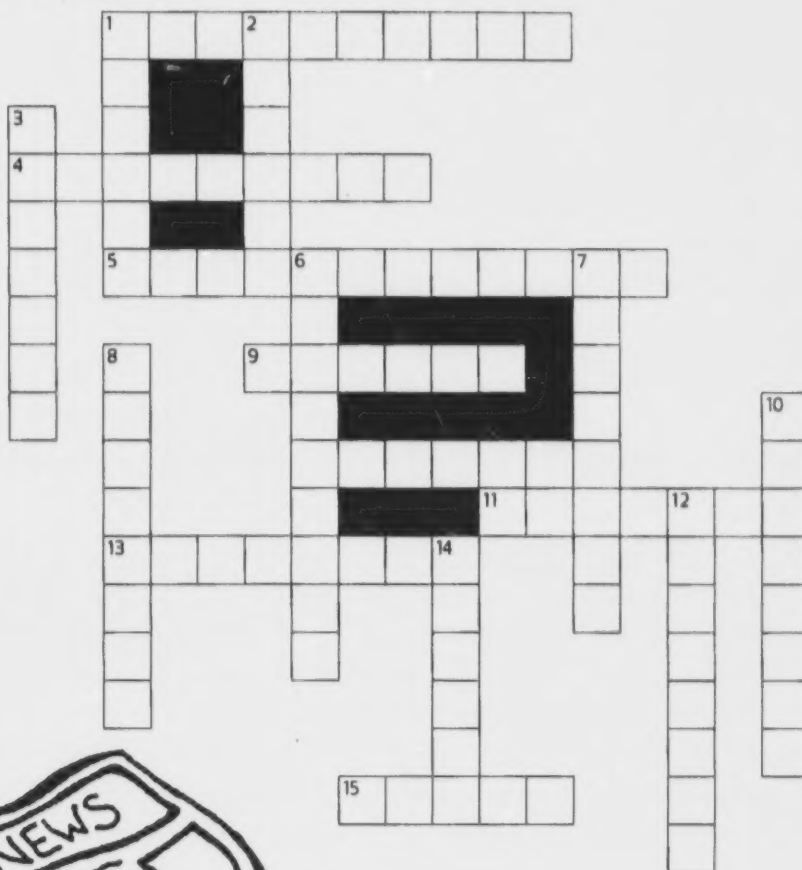
14. News from other _____ outside the U.S. is often called "World news."
15. The part of the newspaper with opinions, editorials and _____ from readers is the "Editorial page."

Down clues

2. The "Business" section reports about companies, about the economy, and about _____.
3. An "Obituary" is a story about someone who _____ recently.
4. In the "Sports" section you can find news about football _____.
6. The _____ has many different sections. These are sometimes called Section A, Section B, etc.
7. A "coupon" is an ad you can cut out and take to a store to save _____.
13. The _____ of a newspaper story is called the "headline."

Word list

business
classified
comics
coupon
crossword
editorial
forecast
headline
letter
national
obituary
section
sports
subscription
weather
world



Level B (harder)

Note to instructors:

These two puzzles have almost the same clues. Students who start with Level A may want to try again with Level B, since they will be learning the new vocabulary as they do the puzzle.

The students may be able to find any answers they don't know by browsing through a copy of the newspaper. (Provide the word list only if the students need some extra help.)

Across clues

1. The _____ section has things for sale, garage sales, and jobs.
4. The part of the newspaper with opinions and letters to the editor is the _____ page.
5. If you want the newspaper to come to your house every day, you can buy a _____.
9. A _____ is an ad you can cut out and take to the store to save money.
11. In the _____ news you can find out how cold it will be tomorrow.
13. The _____ news is news from all over the United States.
15. News from other countries is often called _____ news.

Down clues

1. The _____ are funny stories with pictures of people and animals.
2. In the _____ section you can find news about football games.
3. The newspaper has many different parts. These parts are sometimes called _____ A, B, C, etc.
6. You can find a _____ puzzle in the paper every day, but it is very difficult.
7. An _____ is a story about someone who died recently.
8. The _____ section reports about money, the economy and about companies.
10. The weather for the next five days is called a _____.
12. The title of a story in the newspaper is called the _____.
14. People who want to say something in the newspaper can write a _____ to the editor.

Tools & techniques: Analogies

Here is a simple yet interesting exercise that you can do with students at any level—make analogies with the vocabulary that they know. First, show the students some examples to teach the concept. Some possibilities are:

*Apple is to fruit as cabbage is to vegetable.
Nurse is to hospital as teacher is to school.*

To decipher these, ask the students to explain the relationship between the first pair of words, and then talk about what ways the second pair has the same relationship. For example, there are many different kinds of fruit, and apple is one of them, just as there are many different kinds of vegetables and cabbage is one of them. And, a nurse is paid to work in a hospital, just as a teacher is paid to work in a school. The students may come up with other ideas to explain the relationships—for example, fruit and vegetable are both categories of food; apple and cabbage are both round. Or, nurses work with a lot of patients in the hospital, just as teachers work with a lot of students in a school.

Next, use some very simple examples to check that the students understand how these word problems work:

*Shoe is to foot as hat is to _____.
Penny is to dime as dime is to _____.*

See if the students can not only give the answer but also explain why (what is the relationship?).

Practice with analogies

To play with this general concept further, have your students solve each of the puzzles on the list on the next page, if they can. Then talk about why each answer is correct.

You can incorporate this exercise more specifically into your thematic lessons on any topic the students are studying—food (pasta is to boil as cake is to ____), emergencies, job skills, citizenship, etc.—by preparing some word puzzles using the vocabulary in the lesson. This even works with numbers:

*2 is to 4 as 3 is to _____.
(There are two correct answers to this one!)*

Follow up

Have each student select one of the analogies you've discussed and write out an explanation of the solution.

Why it works

In a way this seems like merely a vocabulary exercise, giving students some practice with the words they have learned, but it is really much more than that. An analogy is 'telegraphic' because it conveys a lot of meaning in just a few words. It's a good exercise for adult ESL because little language is needed to convey sophisticated meaning. Even students with little English can use their intelligence to solve difficult puzzles.

But the real language practice in this exercise comes when you invite students to explain their answers. Articulating their reasoning involves thinking about categories, process and relationships.

Finally, these mini-puzzles are fun and satisfying to solve. ➡

Thanks to Linda Phipps, ESL instructor in Midwest City, Oklahoma and HOE Board member for sharing this activity and the examples.

Do some analogies about current events!

Kabul is to Afghanistan as _____ is to the United States.

Tony Blair is to Great Britain as _____ is to the U.S.

Koran is to Islam as _____ is to Christianity.

Pakistan is to Afghanistan as _____ is to Canada.

Aircraft carriers are to the Navy as _____ are to the Air Force.

Persian Gulf is to Saudi Arabia as North Sea is to _____.

Mosque is to Muslims as _____ is to Jews.

Peace is to war as quiet is to _____.

Here are two analogies that were heard on the news recently:

"Al Qaeda is to terror what the Mafia is to crime."

"Islamic extremists (like the Taliban) are to Islam what the Ku Klux Klan is to Christianity."

Can you or your students think of more analogies?

Find the analogy

Note to instructors:

It's probably most beneficial to present these problems one at a time rather than as a whole set. To do these with a large class, you can make an overhead transparency of this page and show the problems one at a time. Or, select a few and write them on the chalkboard.

- arm is to hand as leg is to _____
- pig is to pork as steer is to _____
- baseball is to bat as tennis is to _____
- The Yankees are to baseball as the _____ are to football
- stomachache is to doctor as toothache is to _____
- daughter is to aunt as son is to _____
- teacher is to principal as employee is to _____
- pencil is to write as gun is to _____
- one is to two as first is to _____
- none is to all as first is to _____
- hand is to elbow as foot is to _____
- meow is to cat as _____ is to dog
- four is to rectangle as three is to _____
- creek is to river as hill is to _____
- money is to bank as letter is to _____
- plane is to hangar as car is to _____
- plane is to air as car is to _____
- heat is to furnace as cool is to _____
- boy is to shirt as girl is to _____
- morning is to breakfast as evening is to _____
- knife is to cut as pen is to _____
- snow is to white as blood is to _____
- pipe is to water as wire is to _____
- fact is to fiction as late is to _____
- pleasure is to smile as pain is to _____
- cheetah is to fast as turtle is to _____

Hints & tips: Pronunciation

How can you best help your students improve their pronunciation? Many teachers feel (and we agree) that learning pronunciation 'rules' may not be the best use of your students' time. Like knowledge of grammar rules, knowledge of pronunciation rules does not always carry over into the students' regular use of the language. So you have to find a balance between information that might be useful to them with direct, practical, 'hands-on' help.

What doesn't work

We brainstormed recently about what kinds of approaches to teaching pronunciation seem to help, and which do not. Here are a few that we feel are less successful:

- **Imitating**—Many adults are reluctant to imitate strange sounds that sound 'wrong' to them. (They don't like to appear silly.)
- **Repeating**—Most people can't automatically reproduce sounds that they hear, even if they are trying to. If you don't understand the difference between the sound you are making and the sound you are hearing, it doesn't help to keep repeating it.
- **Learning rules**—As we said above, there is often a disconnect between the study and the practice of actually speaking, although certain structural knowledge can help some people.
- **Face diagrams**—We love those X-ray diagrams that show how sounds are produced in your mouth, but we have never gotten students to benefit from them. The theory seems right but perhaps students can't translate these ideas over to their own mouths.
- **Too much focus on individual sounds**—We love to worry about r's, l's and th's but the real barrier to comprehensible pronunciation in English is at the sentence level—stress and intonation. Many older books on pronunciation don't focus enough on this aspect.

What does work!

Don't despair, there are some approaches that do seem to work! These include the following:

- **A calm, friendly atmosphere in class**—Students are more likely to take risks with pronunciation if the environment is non-threatening and they know they won't be ridiculed or look stupid. Fun (or even silly) games can help to promote confidence that aids in better pronunciation. Songs, poems,

and chants can really loosen people up—the most popular example is the *Jazz Chants* series by Carolyn Graham (Oxford University Press, www.oup-usa.org/esl). Pro Lingua has a new book of lively poems for oral practice called *Rhymes 'n Rhythms* (see their ad on page 14 of this issue). Ask any teacher who uses this technique—it works.

- **Listening discrimination tasks**—If you can teach students to *hear* the difference between sounds, they will be more likely to *produce* the sounds correctly. It's a step that's often skipped because we want to jump right in and get students talking. Many newer texts on pronunciation have some excellent listening exercises for students. *Sounds Great* by Beverly Beisbier (Heinle & Heinle, www.heinle.com) is a good example of this. Another wonderful resource for this kind of activity would be the many listening texts available for ESL, so it's worth doing some browsing to find these.
- **More attention to stress, rhythm and intonation**—the chants and poems we mentioned above can help your students learn the "music" of English. These concepts can also be studied and practiced, for example by having students tap out syllables with their hand if they are not sure of English rhythms. A good text to help beginning students understand and use these skills is *Clear Speech from the Start* by Judy B. Gilbert (Cambridge University Press, www.cup.org).
- **On-the-spot lessons**—The best time to teach pronunciation is at exactly the moment when a problem comes up. To do this, you'll need to have a treasure trove of useful tips and tricks, background knowledge, rules and explanations ready in case they are needed. Some examples: For students who have problems with *r* and *l*, teacher Abbie Tom recommends holding a pencil between your teeth; the tongue touches the pencil for *l* but not for *r*. For problems with *p* and *b*, hold your hand up in front of your mouth and notice the airflow with the *p*. To help correct a word or sentence stress problem, use colored blocks of different sizes to represent each syllable. Push them together to indicate blending, or point to the syllable the student is having trouble with. This visual trick gets you away from the printed page and is often successful.

In our next issue—games, games, games for pronunciation practice! ➡

Do you have a favorite tip or trick for teaching pronunciation? If so, let us know and we'll pass these along to our readers!

Tools & techniques: Understanding vowel sounds

One problem confronting students new to English is that there seems to be an infinite number of vowel sounds. This difficulty affects students' listening comprehension, pronunciation and reading. It's hard for them to match up a word they hear with a word in print, and very difficult to make a correct guess at pronouncing a new word. Students often have no way to know whether a sound they are attempting to pronounce matches up closely enough with a sound they have heard.

Only a very few people have the auditory skills to identify all of the sounds in a new language "by ear." For the majority, it can help to know what the framework is, so that there is a basis for comparison.

Did you know that there are basically 16 vowel sounds in English? And that each of these sounds differs from the others by the physical way they are made? If you studied linguistics, of course you know all about this. However, most linguistics explanations are too complex to deal with in the precious little time you have with your students. Here is a very streamlined and simple way to explain the difference in vowel sounds to help your students get a grip on these.

On the chart below, vowels 1-5 are "smile" vowels, which is how tense your lips are when you say them. Vowel 1 is the most smiley, vowel 5 is the least smiley. Now if you demonstrate two of the sounds you can not only hear the difference, but you can feel it with your mouth

as well. Ask your students to say the sounds with you, 5 through 1, and see if each one feels a little smilier than the one before. Vowels 9 through 11 are made with rounded lips, each one rounder than the one before. The vowels in the middle, 6-8, are made with untensed, unrounded lips, and your mouth is open when you say them. The most open sound is 7, the one in the middle.

These 11 sounds, then, are on a continuum. If your students know this and can say the examples, they now have a tool to compare a new word with. Which sound do you hear in *yes*? Is it more like 3, 4 or 5? In spite of the difference in consonants, the students should be able to answer correctly. They should also now be able to hear which of these four words has a different sound: *red, bad, said, dead*. And which of these words has a different beginning sound: *educate, alligator, energy, elevator*. If your students need practice comparing these sounds, make up some worksheets with similar examples.

The diphthongs are simply two sounds together (vowel 12 is 7+2, vowel 13 is 7+10 and vowel 14 is 8+2). The schwa sounds like nothing (unaccented, untense, unopen, unrounded) but it's very important as it's the sound we use in most unstressed syllables. Finally the 'r' vowel sound has to be mentioned as it sounds different from all the others. It's the only one made at the back of your mouth. ➔

"smile" sounds					"open" sounds			"round" sounds		
1: i ^y	2: I	3: e ^y	4: ɛ	5: æ	6: ʌ	7: ɑ	8: ɔ	9: ɒ ^w	10: ʊ	11: u ^w
meat	hit	say	bet	cat	up	box	call	phone	book	food

mixed sounds (diphthongs)		
12: aI	13: aU	14: ɔI
hi	how	boy

'schwa'
15: ə
banana

vowels with 'r'
16: ɹ
girl

Teaching tips

Some teachers like their students to learn a modified form of IPA (the international phonetic alphabet), so we have included these symbols on the chart. Many ESL dictionaries use these symbols, so students who take the trouble to learn them will find it much easier to pronounce new words that they look up in the dictionary.

How about color coding the sounds? A reader in Canada told us about an article by Julianne Finger in the *TESL Canada Journal*

(Vol. 2 No. 2, March 1985, www.tesl.ca) called "Teaching Pronunciation with the Vowel Colour Chart". Each sound is matched to a color, and the name of each color includes that sound (i.e., green = i^y). This is a very clever way of adding a visual dimension to learning sounds.

Reference note:

The concept of "smile," "open" and "round" sounds and the general sequence of vowels presented here come from *The A.D.D. Program, Auditory Discrimination in Depth* by Charles H. Lindamood and Patricia C. Lindamood (Teaching Resources Corporation). This material, used primarily for people with learning disabilities to teach phonemic awareness, has now been republished as the *Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing Program* (Gander Educational Publishing). More information at <http://www.lblp.com>.

A student dinner—Level D

Camelia _____

Juan _____

Juan _____

A student dinner—Level E

(Try writing the dictation on a blank piece of paper!)

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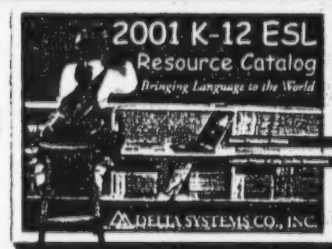
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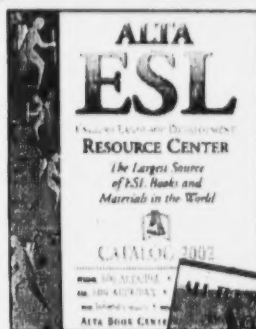
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News & notes

In past issues

If you are looking for more seasonal topics, you might want to know about our reading and discussion activity on **New Year's resolutions** in Volume 9, Number 4. The related grammar activity in the same issue, "Next year I'm going to stop smoking," provides an opportunity to practice future tenses and can be adapted for more advanced students. (For example, try having them write about the resolutions in the past tense: "Last year he said he was going to stop smoking, but he didn't.")

Some of our past holiday puzzles included a non-religious "**Christmas**" puzzle in Vol. 4, No. 4 and an

intermediate level puzzle just called "**Holidays**" in Vol. 6, No. 4 about special occasions throughout the year.

Other resources

The ESL Teacher's Holiday Activities Kit by Elizabeth Claire (published 1990 by The Center for Applied Research in Education, ISBN 0-87628-305-9) has reproducible picture stories that help to teach basic vocabulary and customs of many different holidays and special events. Although intended for a younger audience, the clear drawings and straightforward descriptions provide useful introductory material for adults too. The book is available from book distributors like Alta and Delta. ➔



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A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

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Don't worry

We've heard some discouraging reports already from teachers around the U.S. about cutbacks in their adult ESL programs, due to state budget problems. We anticipate that this problem will get worse before it gets better. The good news is (speaking as a rapidly aging veteran of this field) that whatever downturns there are now, there will be an upswing in education funding again once the economy reaches some equilibrium. We've seen this before; we'll see it again.

In the meantime, we hope you'll keep us informed about what's going on where you are—we're very interested in how you're doing.

Another discouraging trend is that we see anti-immigrant bigotry rearing its ugly head again in public discourse. We've seen this before, we'll see it again. It probably has as much to do with the economy as it does with fears of terrorism. As advocates of our students, we must keep plugging along, and remind everyone we speak to that a) we are all immigrants and that b) we need these newcomers. We should keep speaking out about the truth, but also remember that these things go in cycles. Let's just hope they are *evolving* cycles, not repeating ones.

Rising to the occasion

In these difficult times Americans are talking about sacrifice, doing something for our communities, pulling together, trying to make a difference. But hey, wait a minute—this is what you, the people giving their time and efforts and attention to helping people learn English, adjust to a new country and become citizens, have been doing all along!

Many of you are doing this work for no pay, some are doing it for low pay, a very few are doing it for reasonable pay but little chance for the kind of benefits and advancement one sees in other professions. And all of you, without exceptions, are working under difficult conditions.

Why? Why are you doing this work? If you are reading this, I don't even need to tell you. We all understand the many good and wonderful reasons for working with these students. But what I would like to say is that you should be held up as role models for the rest of the country for what is meant by constructive giving. There's no need for you to rise to the occasion—you've been doing it all along.

Working for you

We want to assure you that *Hands-on English* will continue to try to help teachers and tutors as best we can regardless of any economic downturns. While we are of course always looking for new subscribers to keep growing, in fact it is our loyal renewing subscribers who keep the electrons flowing through our computer. As long as you're there, we'll be here!

We know that postage will go up again soon, and we will likely have to raise our prices next fall to cover this. But don't worry—we are well aware that people are often paying for HOE out of their own pockets, and we will make sure it remains affordable. And, we'll continue to be the most valuable help you can get for your buck.

Enjoy this issue, and happy teaching!
—the Editor. ☛

Hands-on English

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We're in our second decade! *Hands-on English* has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

The articles and ideas in HOE come from experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have a lesson or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?

Our subscribers work with ESL students in a wide range of programs, including: Refugee programs, Literacy programs, Community colleges, Colleges and universities, Correctional facilities, Resource centers, **Adult Education programs**, Volunteer tutoring, Intensive ESL programs, Teacher training programs, Religious organizations, Worker's unions, Community Education programs, Secondary schools, Workplace education, Language institutes, Libraries . . . and more!

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Letters

... & cards,
emails,
calls,
rumors,
etc.

Volunteerism in Tennessee

In our last issue, we asked readers to tell us about ways they have found to connect students with the community. We got this very interesting response from Dianne Scott, formerly of Tennessee:

"I often talked with my students about volunteerism as a way to get involved and while the idea isn't too common in most countries where the students came from, it is interesting to talk about this form of contact with the community, a way to connect with English-speaking people, and a way to make friends in the community at large.

"The word 'volunteer' was on the license plates of most of my Tennessee students so they were at least aware and wanted to learn more about why Tennessee was called the Volunteer State. We often used the term as so many of my teacher aides were volunteers, and students wondered why they came to the classroom without getting any pay.

"There are so many ways that students can volunteer and these ways could be listed, sentences written about the work that they might enjoy doing on a volunteer basis, a log could be kept with records of their volunteer efforts. Sometimes the class itself can go out into the community to talk to people about the volunteer project. Since Tennessee has an elaborate network to promote this idea it's easy in that state to hook up with the already established organization."

—Dianne E. Scott
Leesburg, Florida

Multi-sensory projects

We also heard from Jean Hanslin in St. Paul, Minnesota, that their program has received an innovative practices grant for some ESL projects. They are planning a photo books project, a sewing and quilting project, and a theatrical video project, all of which will give students an opportunity to use their skills to create something that can be shared with other students and with other members of the community. These projects are electives that students can participate in every Friday.



Teacher-created materials

We heard recently by email from Cynthia Shermeyer in Delaware, who is starting a workplace ESL project for housekeepers. She was having difficulty locating materials that seemed appropriate. Finally, she came up with this plan:

"I have decided to publish my own text for the class. I have been at the hotel taking pictures of locations, things, you name it. The pictures will be put on a CD and then (I'm told) I can transfer the CD pictures to my computer and print them out in color with my printer. Add text and—I have a customized book! I am keeping my fingers crossed this will work!"

—Cynthia E. Shermeyer
(by email) in Delaware

Kudos from a reader

"This is the single best 'trade magazine' in existence. Every issue is crammed with useful, wonderful ideas. I love it!"

—Nancy Williams, LVA of the Lowcountry
Hilton Head Island, S.C.

HOE for native speakers?

"I have never seen this use of HOE mentioned. . . My pre-GED teachers make effective use of the HOE crossword puzzle and many of the activities in each issue. The students—all native English speakers by the way—enjoy the activities because they can be successful with them while simultaneously building needed basic skills in math and reading. I have four pre-GED/GED teachers who use HOE regularly.

"I'll bet ours is not the only adult literacy GED program that is enriched by your fine publication. Keep up the good work!"

—Grace Carson
Adult Literacy Program Mgr
BOCES2-Monroe/Orleans Counties
Rochester, New York

Tools & techniques: Speaking with emphasis

Here's an activity to help your students practice stress and intonation in English sentences. In English, we often put stress on the part of the sentence we are emphasizing, or raise the intonation, or both. This can have a big effect on the meaning of the sentence. Depending on what language the students are coming from, this may seem quite different from the way they are used to speaking. In fact, in some languages such intonation patterns might even seem rude.

So, it's up to us to make it clear to students what effect these voice patterns have on meaning, as well as help them to feel comfortable using them.

Asking for clarification

Give your students an example sentence, like: "*I drove downtown yesterday to renew my driver's license.*" Ask a student to read this sentence. Then, pose a question that requires the student to read the sentence again with different intonation. For example:

Where did you go yesterday?	I went <u>DOWNTOWN</u> yesterday.
When did you go downtown?	I went downtown <u>YESTERDAY</u> .
How did you get downtown?	I <u>DROVE</u> downtown.
Why did you go downtown?	To renew my <u>DRIVERS LICENSE</u> .
Who went downtown yesterday?	<u>I</u> went downtown.

Try this with several other examples. For example:

Susanna starts her new job next Tuesday. (Who? What? When?)
My niece is learning how to play the piano.
The President is going to give a speech in San Francisco tomorrow.
My brother would like to study computer science some day.

Making corrections

Another amusing activity which provides good practice with emphasis is a "faulty reading" exercise. Show the students a simple reading passage, perhaps one that they are already familiar with. Tell them that you would like to read this aloud to them, but that you are having some trouble with your eyes today. In case they hear any mistakes, they should help by correcting you. Then, read each sentence aloud, making a blatant error in each one.

For example, if the passage says 'Chicago is a very large city,' read 'small' instead. Then give a student the chance to correct you: "That's not correct, it says Chicago is a very LARGE city." Thank the student for the

One situation in which strong emphasis is appropriate is when we aren't quite sure what someone said, or we are asking for clarification. Here's an activity which can be amusing since it involves pretending that you didn't quite understand. It is also valuable practice for the students in making themselves clear and asking for clarification.

Do the examples below with the class, then have them try the examples with a partner. Next, have the students write a sentence about something they did last week. Have each student read their sentence aloud, then ask for clarification, as if you didn't quite get it. The student should then repeat with the correct emphasis.

Thanks to **Linda Phipps** in Midwest City, Oklahoma for inspiring this activity!

correction, then continue on, mangling each sentence as you go.

Some students will join into this activity enthusiastically, trying to spot your error. Other students will feel reluctant to correct the teacher, but it's important that they learn to do this. You can help by providing some polite phrases they can start with, if necessary. ("Excuse me, I think it says...") If students are really reluctant, you might try calling on them rather than waiting for volunteers. (i.e., "Huang, did I read that correctly?")

This little exercise practices a number of different skills simultaneously, and usually brings some laughter, too. ➡



"I'm having trouble reading today. . . maybe it's my glasses."



Pronunciation Card Games by Linnea Henry (1999 Pro Lingua Associates, www.ProLinguaAssociates.com). ISBN 0-86647-115-4.

Pronunciation games...

The first part of this book has 12 sets of picture cards for practicing sound distinctions (minimal pairs) such as pen/pan, gem/jam. You can use these cards for a variety of simple games that require the students to both make and hear the distinction between the sounds. The author suggests 'Sort 'n Stack' in which the students group the cards with the same sound, 'Four of a Kind', 'Bingo', and 'Go Fish'. All of these will provide a low-stress environment for practice on tricky sounds. Because the students have to understand the sounds in order to succeed, these games are self-correcting. This is much nicer than other exercises that rely on the teacher modeling the sounds.

The second part of the book has what we think are much more interesting activities that help students to hear sentence stress, word stress and syllables. Using a set of cards with simple geometric shapes, for example, students play a game called "Liar" to practice emphasis. Describing their cards, students say "It's a small heart in a circle" and "It's a BIG heart in a circle," depending on which feature they are contrasting. (This is actually a fairly tricky logic game!) You

can also use these cards to play a form of Dominoes, also to practice emphasis.

Another set of cards shows U.S. states and Canadian provinces. These are used in two clever ways; one in a game to match the names with the same number of syllables, and the other to match the names with the same stress pattern. Native speakers of English probably take hearing the number of syllables for granted, but for many ESL students this is something that has to be learned.

For more advanced students, there is a game to match the names of U.S. Presidents (or other famous people) with a diagram of the stress pattern for each name. And finally, a clever (but not simple) game in which students create a sentence from picture cards, then form a contradiction for practice in using emphasis. For example, "Didn't he DRIVE to the office?" "No, he WALKED to the office."

As the author points out, most of the games can be played either competitively or not, making them useful for beginners just learning as well as for more advanced students as review. ➤

...and more games!

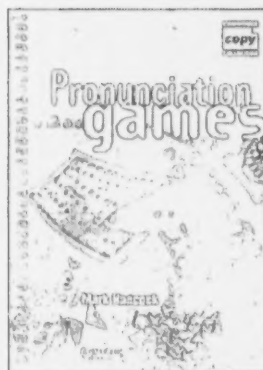
This book isn't new, but in case you haven't seen it before, it's a great addition to your teaching collection. There are three dozen games, all in photocopiable format. Like the previous book, the idea is that the learners will discover certain aspects of pronunciation by playing a game or solving a puzzle, rather than just imitating the teacher. This book relies on printed words, however, not pictures, for the games.

The first section of the book has games for learning about syllables and stress. 'Making tracks,' for example, involves rolling dice and circling words with that number of syllables. This is simple and fun, and can be adapted to any content or level. 'Stress snap' is a card game with printed words, finding matching stress patterns. For example, *shampoo* and *police* have the same stress pattern. 'Stepping stones' is a clever maze that students solve by matching stress patterns. A more advanced version of this requires students to know past tense forms—is called one syllable or two?

The second section, on sound awareness, includes games that practice vowel sounds, such as the 'Four-sided dominoes' game (does *these* match with *week*?) A challenging board game called 'Ludo' involves finding words with a certain vowel sound. The sound mazes are fun but tricky because often the sounds match but the spellings don't. 'Battleships,' in which the coordinates are sounds, is a very clever and challenging game. Sound 'Bingo' is an unusual way of practicing minimal pairs, and probably quite challenging for beginners.

The final section, on connected speech, seems less useful, but we really like 'Contradict me' to practice contrastive stress. "The Atlantic is the world's biggest ocean." "You mean, the PACIFIC is the world's biggest ocean!"

There are a few small points in which the book's (British) English varies from North American usage, but these will be easy to adapt. ➤



Pronunciation games by Mark Hancock (1995 Cambridge University Press, www.cup.org). ISBN 0-521-46735-7.

Role-playing activity: Who are they?

Here's a simple role-playing activity that gives students a chance to practice their communication and improvising skills while having fun. It will work well with students at any level, as well as in multi-level groups. The exercise can be the starting point for further lessons in reading, writing and oral communication.

If you have watched improvisational theater or seen the TV show "Whose line is it anyway?" you may be familiar with this game. Two 'actors' are given a role to play, but we are not told what this is. As they speak, we have to guess who they are portraying. In our examples, the roles are relatively straightforward. The more advanced your students are, the more layers of complication you can add to the roles.

How to do it

The students should work in pairs for this activity. If you have a large class, or if some students are hesitant about participating, you could also assign a third person to each group to function as the 'director.'

Each group receives a role card. Explain that they will act out these roles for the class, and the class will try to guess who they are. Give the students some time to plan this and perhaps to practice. Usually in each class there are at least a couple of

students who get it right away, so you could ask these students to kick off the game by presenting their roleplay first. The other students will catch on right away.

Play it again

Once all the groups have presented their roleplays, and the students have guessed the roles correctly, you could shuffle the role cards, redistribute and play again. This sounds like it might be repetitive, but the skits will get better and better as the students pick up ideas and vocabulary from each other. The repetition will be interesting, because each version will be slightly different.

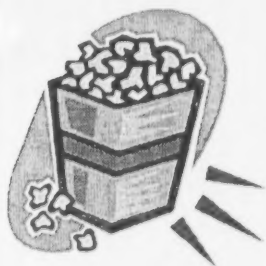
For beginners

Here's a great tip for playing this game with beginners—have all the actors do their skits in pantomime! This will make it much harder for the audience to guess the roles, and it can be very funny. It will also take a huge amount of stress off of the actors. Once the roles have been guessed correctly, then ask each pair of actors to run through their skit again, still pantomiming, while students from the audience provide the 'soundtrack'. This dialog could be written down as a script; then students might volunteer to present that skit *with* spoken lines. By that time, the story line will be familiar. ➤

Student A: You are a boy who wants to go to the movies. Student B: You are the boy's mother. You don't want him to go.	Student A: You are an employee at the bank. Student B: You are a bank customer. You want to cash your paycheck.
Student A: You are an employee at an airline security checkpoint. Student B: You are a passenger with a lot of bags.	Student A: You are a policeman. You stop a driver for speeding. Student B: You are driving to school. You are late.
Student A: You are a post office employee. Student B: You are a customer. You have a new address and you are worried about getting your mail.	Student A: You are a teacher. You are giving an important test tomorrow. Student B: You are student. You can't come to school tomorrow.
Student A: You are the owner of a shoe store. Student B: You are a customer. You are returning a pair of shoes you bought yesterday, because they don't fit.	Student A: You are an employee in a supermarket. You are checking out groceries, but there is no price on the bread. Student B: You are a busy parent. You are buying food for your family at the supermarket.

Conversation activity: Talking about movies

Recently there's been a lot of excitement in the press over new movies such as *Harry Potter*, and *Lord of the Rings*. For a change, these movies are suitable for children, so if your students haven't seen them they may have heard about them from their kids!



Preparing for the puzzle

On the next two pages is one of our multi-level crossword puzzles, on the topic of going to the movies. There are two levels available, with Level B just a bit more difficult than Level A. Both puzzles have the same clues, but the missing words are different. Students who complete Level A should be able to learn the new vocabulary needed to do the puzzle again and succeed at Level B.

Before starting the puzzle, it would be nice to ask the students whether they are interested in movies at all, or whether their kids are. What kind of movies do they like? Here are some preferences to discuss, i.e., "Do you prefer watching a video at home or going to a movie theater?"

video/movie theater
old movies/new movies
for adults/for children
near home/far from home
go early/go late
sit in front/sit in back
have popcorn/don't have popcorn
eat before/eat after

Types of movies

Together with the students, generate a list of the kinds of movies that are available. For example, science fiction, fantasy, comedy, children's movies, horror, drama, western, documentary, etc. Ask the students if they know the name of a movie for each category, for example "Star Wars" is a science fiction

Other resources

The *Oxford Picture Dictionary* (black book, 0-19-470059-3) doesn't have a special section on movie theaters, however on page 166 they have eight small pictures that cleverly illustrate different genres of stories such as comedy, tragedy, etc.

A *Conversation Book 1* by Carver and Fotinos (Prentice Hall, 0-13-792433-X) has a nice drawing of the lobby of a movie theater on page 176. This illustrates some vocabulary (refreshment stand, ticket, collect, etc.) as well as showing the process of visiting a movie theater.

A *to Zany, Community Activities for Students of English* by Stafford-Yilmaz (Univ Michigan Press, 0-472-08501-8) has a chapter on movies that invites students to read reviews, then attend a movie to compare their impressions with those of the reviewer. Nice for high intermediate or advanced students.

movie, also a kid's movie. It might seem more relevant to do this exercise the other way around; that is, name some movies the students know about and then determine which category each belongs to. Refer to the newspaper listings for the names of current movies.

Next, ask the students to tell you about movies they've seen in their first language. Add the names of these to the list of examples after deciding which category they might fit into. You can also add new categories if appropriate, for example if your students enjoy martial arts films or something else that is not on the list.

Movie reviews

Ask your students to prepare some comments about a movie they would like to recommend. This could be a current movie, a classic, or a movie in another language. Have them explain:

What is the name of this movie?

What kind of movie is it?

What is the story about?

Why did you like this movie?

What was the best part of the movie?

Who should see this movie? Why?

Where can we see this movie?

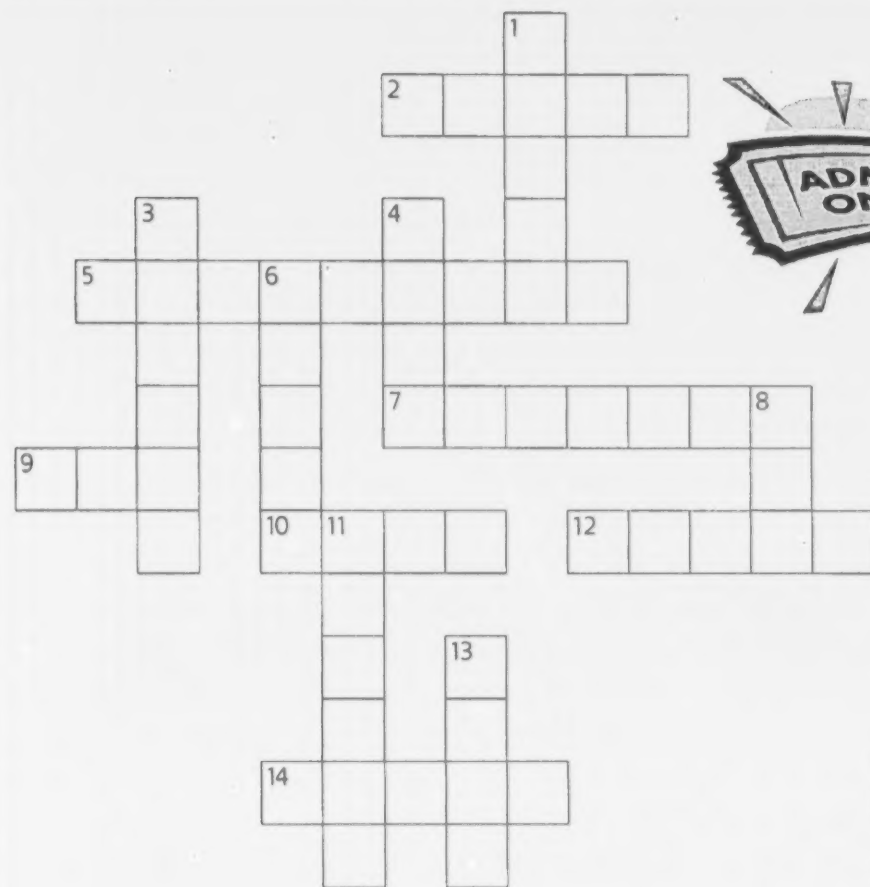
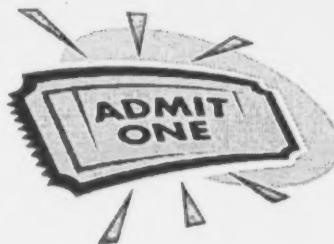
You could have the students present these reviews orally to the class. However, this kind of presentation can be intimidating. Another approach is to have the students meet in small groups of 3 or 4 and present their reviews orally to each other. Then, switch the groups around so that the students give the same review again to different people. Once each student has had the chance to speak with two or three groups and answer some questions, they may feel more prepared and more confident about presenting their review to the whole class.

As a homework assignment to follow this up, have students write their movie review. When completed, these can be collected together and shared with the other students. ➡

Multi-level crossword puzzle: Going to the movies

Word list

actors
before
drink
far
front
line
movie
newspaper
park
see
sleep
tickets
video
want



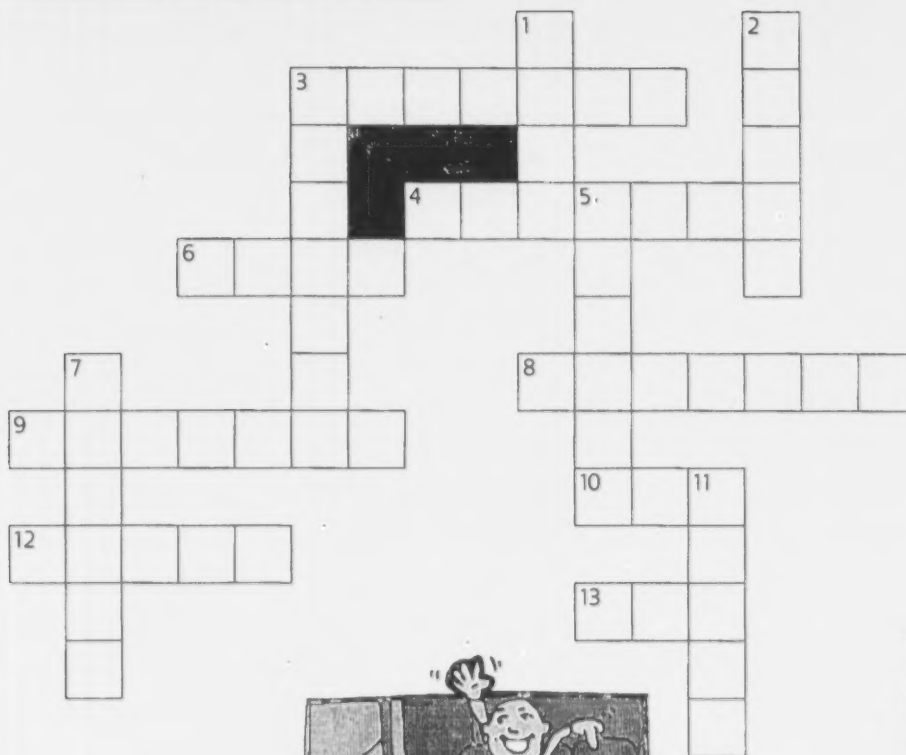
Level A (easier)

Across clues

2. "Do you want to sit down in _____?" "No, it's too loud there. Let's sit in back."
5. "Are there any good movies to see?" "I don't know. Let's look in the _____ to see what's playing."
7. "I'd like four _____, please. Two adults and two children."
9. "There's a good movie at a theater downtown." "That's too _____ away. Can't we find a movie near here?"
10. "This is a very popular movie. I hope we can find a place to _____ the car!"
12. "Do you like going to the movies?" "Not really. I prefer to stay home and watch a _____."
14. "The popcorn smells good. Do you want some?" "No, thanks, I'm not hungry. I'll just get something to _____."

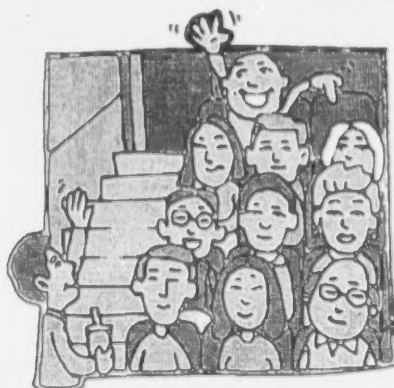
Down clues

1. "Would you like to go to a _____ on Saturday?" "Sure, that sounds great."
3. "Shall we get something to eat _____ or after the movie?" "Let's get a pizza after the movie."
4. "There's a new movie I _____ to see. My brother saw it last week and he says it's really good."
6. "My son couldn't _____ last night." "What's wrong, is he sick?" "No, he saw a scary movie with his friends."
8. "Where are the kids today?" "Their uncle took them to _____ a movie."
11. "What kind of movies do you like?" "I like really old movies with famous _____ like Charlie Chaplin."
13. "Look at all these people waiting in _____!" "That's because it's the first day they are showing this movie."



Word list

adults
back
eat
famous
like
movie
parking
playing
popcorn
saw
scary
theater
waiting
watch



12. "Where are the kids today?" "Their uncle took them to see a _____."
13. "Shall we get something to _____ before or after the movie?" "Let's get a pizza after the movie."

Level B (harder)

Across clues

3. "This is a very popular movie." "I hope we can find a _____ place!"
4. "There's a good movie at a _____ downtown." "That's too far away. Can't we find a movie near here?"
6. "Do you want to sit down in front?" "No, it's too loud there. Let's sit in _____."
8. "Are there any good movies to see?" "I don't know. Let's look in the newspaper to find out what's _____."
9. "Look at all the people _____ in line!" "That's because it's the first day they are showing this movie."
10. "There's a new movie I want to see. My brother _____ it last week and he says it's really good."

Down clues

1. "Would you _____ to go to a movie on Saturday?" "Sure, that sounds great."
2. "My son couldn't sleep last night." "What's the matter, is he sick?" "No, he saw a _____ movie with his friends."
3. "The _____ smells good. Do you want some?" "No, thanks, I'm not hungry. I'll just get something to drink."
5. "I'd like four tickets please. Two _____ and two children."
7. "What kind of movies do you like?" "I like really old movies with _____ actors like Charlie Chaplin."
11. "Do you like going to the movies?" "Not really. I prefer to stay home and _____ a video."

Note to instructors:

See page 7 for some teaching tips for these puzzles! 

From the field:

The Olympic spirit for ESOL students

Athletes as role models

After several terms of setting goals with high intermediate adult ESOL students, I found that more and more of them were sharing with me feelings of discouragement about the lack of progress they were making in learning English. I began to ask myself if there were not some way to help students learn not to give up when they reached a plateau, as intermediate students often do. How could I help my students improve their self-esteem when they reached this learning plateau?

When doing some activities about the Olympics from *Hands-on English*, I found that even students from countries that rarely sent a team to the Games were very informed about this international event. So, the Olympics became the theme of an extended project about achieving personal goals.

What we have in common

To introduce the idea of 'in common,' I ask the question, "What do ____ and I have in common?" I pick a student who has several obvious things in common with me. I draw a Venn diagram at this point as a visual way for the students to see the similarities and differences. The students then work in pairs to draw a diagram and describe what they each have in common with their partner. (I got this idea originally at a workshop given by Sharron Bassano many years ago.)

Students vs athletes

Next, we use the diagram technique to look at what ESOL students and Olympic athletes have in common. This works extremely well as a discussion topic. The students, using blank copies of the diagram, can begin by working in pairs or small groups. I always give each pair or group only one copy to start with in order to promote the idea of working together and to foster verbal communication within the group. Then, I put a giant diagram on the board and elicit all the students' ideas.

To do this, you first give each student another copy of the diagram so they will have it for their notebook. Then, draw two

overlapping circles on the board (one for the students and one for the athletes) and where they intersect you put all the things the two groups have in common. In the parts that don't overlap you put the things that are characteristic of that group alone. Those two parts of the circles become the differences.

The students discover that they have many things in common with Olympic athletes and very few differences. One interesting distinction though—the students realized that in every Olympic race there is one gold medal winner, but in ESOL class every student can be a winner by achieving his or her individual goal.

Inspiration on film

Turning the classroom into an ESOL movie theater, we watched *Cool Runnings*, a movie about a Jamaican bobsled team. This movie is hilariously funny, moving and inspirational, and despite the sometimes heavy Jamaican accents my students were able to get the big picture, which is basically not to give up. A film with a similar theme, *Race the Sun*, gave the students a lot to talk and write about in comparing and contrasting the two.

Follow up with web research

This term I elicited questions that the students had about the upcoming Olympics in Salt Lake City as well as questions about previous Olympics and then I asked where the class thought we could find that information on the Internet. (We had been using the Internet in the computer lab to research health issues). Someone yelled out a guess, "Olympics.com," which worked! The students were able to find answers all their questions except one—What's the weather like in Utah in February? ❧

Many thanks to **Nancy Keller Berlin**, Fairfax County Adult ESOL, in Virginia, for sharing her ideas with us.

An article about this project, entitled "All ESOL Students Are Winners" first appeared in the October/November 2001 issue of *WATESOL News* (Washington DC area Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages). Their website is at www.watesol.org.

About the Olympics in past issues of HOE:

Vol. 2, No. 2—"He's the one who got the gold," a grammar activity about relative clauses.

Vol. 6, No. 2—"An Olympic interview," roleplay with athlete and reporter.

Vol. 7, No. 5—"The Olympics," a beginning-level reading that needs a little updating for use this year.

Vol. 10, No. 2—"The summer Olympics," multi-level dictation & crossword puzzle, and "Mini Olympics in the classroom," team activities and award ceremony.

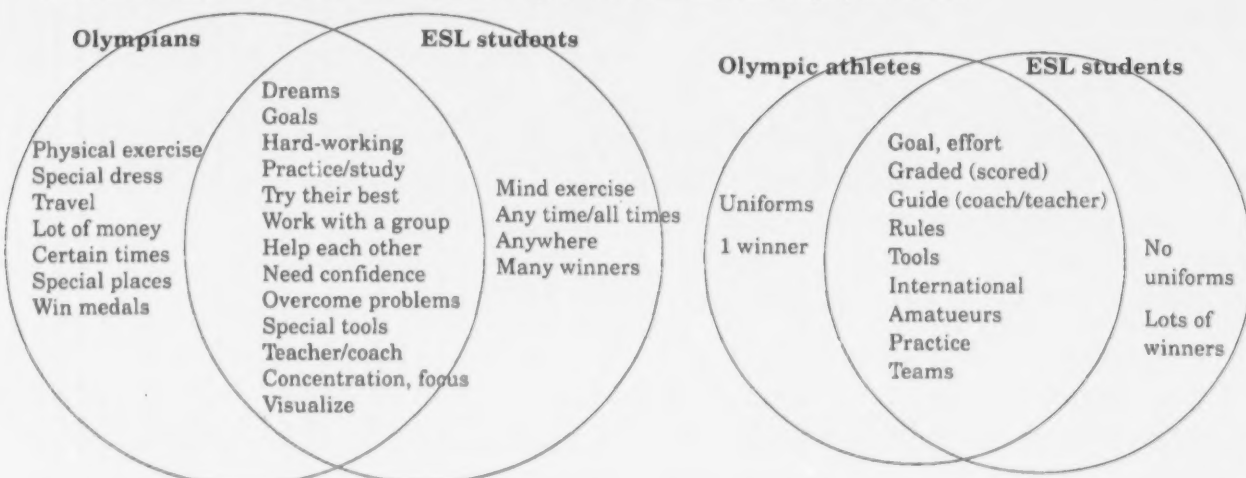
Vol. 10, No. 4—"Teaching as sport," an editorial about encouraging student progress.

And on our website:

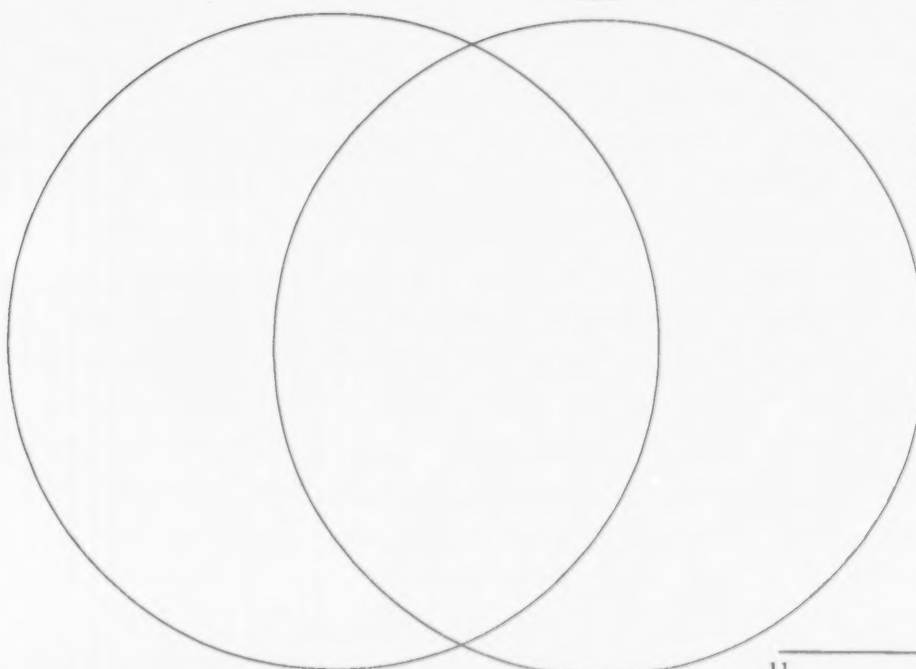
"Olympics—Trying hard to win," Feb 98, intermediate-advanced reading passage with vocab lessons; still current.

"Taking part in the torch relay," Aug 2000, specifically about the Sydney Olympics but has ideas you might adapt.

Here are some of the students' ideas of what they have in common with Olympic athletes:



And here's how some students evaluated two movies they watched about sports competitions:



Here's a blank form your students can use to sketch their ideas. (Enlarge it on your copier first so it's easier to write on.)

Note: Who was Venn? He was a British mathematician who devised this type of diagram in the 1880's in order to present logical statements geometrically. Unfortunately he never became an ESL teacher.
-Ed.

Hints & tips:

Connecting students to community

Over the years, many of my adult ESL students have indicated that they have no one with whom to "practice" speaking English. I have suggested the following and believe it or not, some of them have tried and been happy with these suggestions and the results.

Volunteering

Our local newspaper has a 'Volunteers in Morris County' section. All of the counties in N.J. have agencies which provide volunteers in a wide variety of areas ranging from visiting an elderly person, shopping for a homebound person, even volunteering at a local hospital in a capacity for which they are suited. One of my students used to take an elderly woman food shopping once a week, after which, they would have a cup of tea and enjoy conversation. This provided practice for the student and company for the elderly lady. Another was an "aide" in the hospital gift shop.

Another student was the mother of a third grader. When the woman asked what she could do to get more practice in English, I suggested that she volunteer at the school library. She decided to try and absolutely loves it; additionally, her daughter is thrilled that her Mom "works" in the library.

Joining a club

One of the students, who had had every English course known to man, was disappointed that she had so little opportunity to actually engage in conversation. She has beautiful flowers in her yard and works very hard at maintaining them. I suggested that, instead of taking so many academic classes, that she join a garden club. She did exactly that and is having a wonderful time. Most of the members are American and of course they are "talking" about a common interest.

Finding a tutor

In our area, there's a group called Literacy Volunteers. This organization is listed in the phone book. These are people who offer their time, free of charge, to help adults who want to learn to read, etc. They have also helped by working with those immigrants who are preparing for their citizenship tests and INS interviews. Con-

necting with a literacy volunteer and meeting with them on a regular basis can give a student much help and increased self-confidence.

Getting out

I try to get a schedule of events from the local public library. They have lectures and workshops, free of charge, which I encourage my students to attend. It's good practice for them to participate even if they are only "listening". At the conclusion, refreshments are usually served, providing time for interaction with others. Recently, the local police had a program at the library. It was on "Safety at Home". They all enjoyed it. They also had the opportunity to ask questions.

I often invite speakers to my class. For example, most hospitals will send a speaker who tells the students all about services that are available. One of those services is a language bank. People who are willing, sign up to be called should someone arrive at the hospital and need an interpreter.

Sharing expertise

Last year, I had a very shy woman from China in my class. She lived near The Arboretum, a county park. There's a beautiful, old mansion and absolutely magnificent gardens. Throughout the year, they have many interesting programs, shows and displays. In the Spring, for example, they have a fabulous African Violet Show. Many people are needed. This student is now a volunteer guide. Her comment was, "It has given me so much confidence!"

If the students can be around Americans in a situation where the spotlight is not on their language skills but rather on a common interest or goal, they are able to relax and engage in conversation without realizing that they are "practicing". Those students who have a little part time job seem to progress much more quickly than those who remain at home with a grammar book.

Learning a language, especially for adults, can be very difficult. The more exposure they have to real language and situations, the more quickly they will progress. ➡

Contributed by
Carole Lindstedt, ESL
instructor at the
Parsippany Adult High
School in Parsippany,
New Jersey.

In our last issue, we asked our readers for suggestions about connecting ESL students to the community. We are thrilled to bring you these experiences from Carole Lindstedt, and hope you'll find some ideas to encourage your own students!

Do you have more suggestions? We'd love to hear from you!



Multi-level dictation: Remembering winter

Here's a very short dictation—it's 8 sentences, 56 words.

Have your students choose what level of difficulty they wish to try. Read the dictation, then have students help each other with corrections. Often students like to try the dictation again, at a higher level, so bring plenty of copies.

For literacy level students, you can give them this word list to help them complete Level A: children, cold, day, father, parents, school, snow, think, time, two, winter, young.

Discussion

Why do children like snow? What do adults think about snow? Why?

Follow up

Everyone loves to talk about the terrible winters they remember. This makes a wonderful interview topic. Have your students prepare some simple questions, and talk to an older neighbor or co-worker about the worst winter they can remember. What happened? What did they do? What did they see? Did they have problems? Was it fun?



My parents remember the winters when they were young. This was a long time ago. Every winter they had a lot of snow. It was very cold. They didn't have a school bus. The children had to walk two miles to school every day. What did they think about this? My father says it was fun.

Level A

My _____ remember the winters when they were _____. This was a long _____ ago. Every _____ they had a lot of _____. It was very _____. They didn't have a _____ bus. The _____ had to walk _____ miles to school every _____. What did they _____ about this? My _____ says it was fun.

Level B

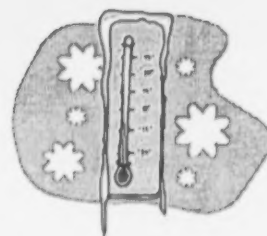
_____ remember _____ when they _____ young. This was a _____. Every winter they _____ a _____ snow. It was _____. They _____ a school bus. The children _____ two _____ to school _____. What did they think _____? My father _____ it was fun.

Level C

My parents _____ the winters _____. This was _____. _____ they had _____. They _____ school _____. The children _____ walk _____ day. What _____ about this? _____ says _____.

Level D

_____ ? _____



Level E

(Try writing the dictation on a blank piece of paper!)

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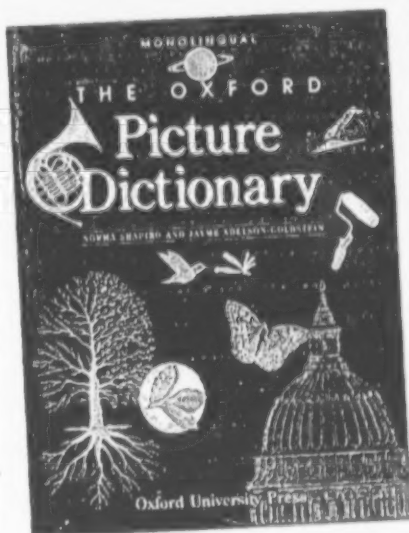
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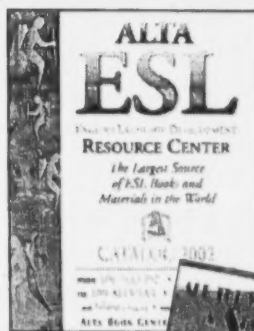


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News & notes

Upcoming conferences?

February, March and April is a time when you'll see lots of meetings and conferences for teachers. These range from small regional get-togethers to major international conventions, on topics of ESL, literacy and education in general.

We try to keep an up-to-date listing of these on our website, so if you're interested in finding a conference in your area, go to www.handsongenish.com and look for the

"Calendar of ESL Events." In case you know about a conference, big or small, that we don't have listed, please do tell us! We'll be happy to make additions to the list.

Take us with you

If you are attending a conference and would like some samples of *Hands-on English* to take along, please contact us. We'll be happy to send you some materials or flyers. Thanks! ✉



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Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

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Messages about media

Here's our early spring offering for you! This issue brings you quite a lot of hints and tips that we hope will spark some ideas or give a lift to your teaching.

TV culture

On the serious side, there is a short reading and dictation in this issue about "TV-Turnoff Week" that we hope your students will find interesting. This topic will give your students a chance to voice their criticisms and concerns, likes and dislikes regarding our media. Even to this editor, brought up in this culture, our airwaves seem chaotic and 'off the rails' in some ways. The dilemma for ESL students may be on the one hand wanting to absorb and understand our culture, and on the other hand not wanting to expose themselves (or their kids) to influences that seem bad, dangerous or wrong. Perhaps this TV-turnoff event, or at least a discussion of it, will give the students a sense that they can take control of this media themselves and apply their own values to it.

While TV might provide some ESL students with language input they can learn from, we have only seen evidence of this in students who were quite advanced already, so that they understand most of the dialogue and are able to pick up some idioms and phrases in context. For lower level students we don't know specifically of anything they gain from watching TV—possibly a little vocabulary but not much else. We know from our own experience of watching Spanish-language TV that there's not much chance we'll remember any of the language just from sitting and watching. Because it's so

passive, it just goes in one ear and out the other.

One of the concerns educators have about TV is that young minds need to be reading more in order to develop thinking skills, and TV takes time away from reading. And, interestingly, the language used on TV is much more limited than the vocabulary and constructions found in print. People need a much broader, more complex and more interesting kind of input than what is found on TV in order to stimulate their minds and grow their vocabularies. This has been said of native speakers, but we suppose it is true also of English learners. If you want to learn English well, you have to read.

A new feature

We are introducing a "Dear Abbie" column in this issue! Our friend and colleague Abbie Tom, in Durham, North Carolina, always provides straightforward, useful advice for ESL teachers. She has volunteered to take on your questions and share her experience, ideas and approaches with you. One reader recently called *Hands-on English* with a question that stumped us—where to find lessons on maps and directions? Fortunately, Abbie has come to the rescue with lots of ideas on this topic. We hope you will find this column useful! If you have a teaching question, we hope you'll send it in so that Abbie will have something to write about for next time. Thank you!

Enjoy this issue, have a happy spring, and have fun teaching! —the Editor. 

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Hands-on English

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We're in our second decade! *Hands-on English* has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

The articles and ideas in HOE come from experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have a lesson or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?

Our subscribers work with ESL students in a wide range of programs, including: Refugee programs, Literacy programs, Community colleges, Colleges and universities, Correctional facilities, Resource centers, **Adult Education programs**, Volunteer tutoring, Intensive ESL programs, Teacher training programs, Religious organizations, Worker's unions, Community Education programs, Secondary schools, Workplace education, Language institutes, Libraries . . . and more!

What do our readers have in common? They are dedicated, they are working under sometimes difficult conditions, and they are looking for practical, adult level materials that will help their students learn English.

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Reader feedback

"I look forward to every issue! *Hands-on English* is such a wonderful resource. Thank you for helping me add variety and creativity to my lessons." Appreciatively,

—**Marionette Jones**
Fairfax County ESL, Virginia

Reader requests

"More ideas, suggestions about jobs and workplace English—I coordinate a program for adult ESL dislocated workers."

—**Jan Hellyer**
Mt. Hood CC, Gresham, Oregon

"I like your publication! I teach in an adult education school. Please include more suggestions on how to teach vocabulary along with suggested materials. I'm always looking for interesting ways to teach vocab. My class is high intermediate and many previous articles deal with it on a more elementary level. Thanks."

—**Nancy Schenkel**
Saint Louis, Missouri

Editor's note: I hope that our readers will have some suggestions for job preparation English, and for higher level vocabulary work. We'll pass along any ideas we find.

More about pronunciation

In our last two issues we've printed a number of articles on pronunciation. We've received quite a bit of feedback about this, especially regarding the article on vowel sounds (Vol. 11, No. 4, p. 13), which was popular.

Some additional thoughts on teaching pronunciation come from **Jean Hanslin** in Saint Paul, Minnesota, where she teaches in a program with 15 different nationalities:

"Whether beginning learners are working consistently in a text, through readings, or with more spontaneous experience stories or original materials, build off of the words encountered there for pronunciation practice. To present an arbitrary, unfamiliar list of vocabulary simply to

practice pronunciation is often confusing to learners. Note the words that cause difficulties as they occur in the natural course of class events; then make up a grouping that can be practiced before or after a reading and ask the students to contribute additional words that give them difficulty. Post separate lists of words where consonant clusters, vowels, final consonants, etc., create problems and practice those selectively. Our students often keep individual, personally-created dictionaries of new words. These provide a great resource for pronunciation practice and comparing sounds. Use highlighter pens to mark letters, clusters, or parts of words that give individuals specific challenges.

"Just practicing out of context, however, is often ineffective. The learners need to realize how others hear them. Have them give you (the instructor) a spelling test of the pronunciation list, and write on the board what you actually hear until they articulate clearly. They may be able to pair up and give each other spelling tests, working on specific sounds as needed. Or, they may gain from taping themselves reading the list of words or sentences, and hearing how much is incomprehensible when it's played back."

ESL in correctional setting?

We are passing along this request for information from **MaryAnn Florez** at NCLE. If you can help her, feel free to contact her directly or contact us at *Hands-on English*. Thank you!

"Does anyone have any information or know of any resources on working with incarcerated youth who are English language learners? I've had a question from a teacher who is searching for anything that can help her work with this group of learners and she has been frustrated at the lack of materials. Does anyone have any ideas? Many thanks!"

—**MaryAnn Florez**, maryann@cal.org
National Center for ESL Literacy
Education (NCLE)

Hints & tips

Student-created puzzles

Here's another nifty idea from our vocabulary guru, **Linda Phipps**. This makes good use of an online puzzle resource for teachers, but then the students do the real work.

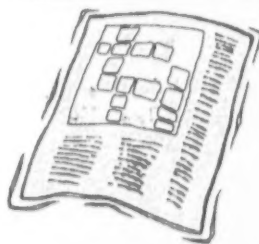
As you prepare a lesson on any subject, choose vocabulary words you wish to emphasize. Then using a free online puzzle program, create a crossword puzzle and have the students write the clues!

Here's how: Go to www.puzzlemaker.com and choose the Criss-Cross Puzzle. You will be asked to type in your vocabulary words with definitions. Follow the instructions and type in the vocabulary words, but with no definitions. Then, click on "Create Puzzle." Puzzlemaker will create a crossword puzzle for you with the vocabulary words and their locations on the puzzle (i.e. "3 down") at the bottom. If you don't like the result, you can repeatedly return to the previous page and click on "Create Puzzle" until you get the crossword shape you most like. The whole process takes only a few minutes.

Print this puzzle out and make copies for every student. The version they should have will be blank except for the numbers; do not include the words. Keep a copy of the puzzle with the words/locations for yourself, so you know where the different words will be written (i.e., "broccoli, 3 down").

During class, as you review the vocabulary, have students take turns creating a sentence with a vocabulary word. Write these on the board, using a blank line where the vocabulary word would have gone (and correcting any grammatical mistakes in the sentence). Also add the puzzle location for that word (i.e., "3 down"). (Students could be asked to give a definition, rather than create a sentence. Either way, write it on the board, minus the vocabulary word itself, and adding the puzzle location.) In an advanced class, a student could do this writing on the board.

Now, pass out the puzzles. Students read the sentences or definitions on the board, mentally filling in the missing vocabulary word or deciding which vocabulary word fits that definition. They write these in at the puzzle locations given on the board.



They enjoy coming up with the clues themselves for the crossword. The activity teaches vocabulary and its use, pronunciation, conversation, grammar, and writing! Also, many have little or no experience working crossword puzzles, and they enjoy this new experience.

"In the restaurant business"

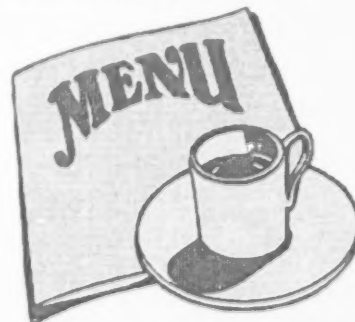
We received this project description from **Kathy Roberg**, with the Advanced ESL Group in Milton Freewater, Oregon.

We studied different kinds of restaurants with the Advanced ESL Group. This included ethnic and traditional restaurants. Some facets of the study included the foods, atmosphere, music, entertainment. We talked about prices and how specials are offered at certain times. The students suggested points of interest such as: coupons offered at certain times, how the bill is paid, hours open, how to advertise, etc.

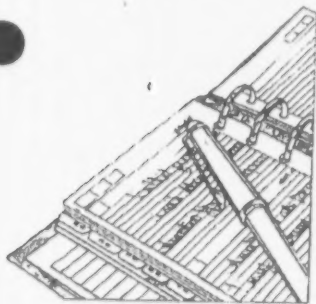
After we discussed this, they worked with a partner to plan a restaurant. They needed to name it, locate it, decide what kind of a restaurant it would be and what foods served, and the added items such as decorations, music, entertainment. Prices were listed, hours, and any other aspect they wished to add to these plans.

Finally they designed their own newspaper ad. These were shared with the whole class. They invited the members of the class to their particular restaurants. Also, before the class ended they each broadcast an ad for their new restaurant over an imaginary radio station.

Some wonderful creative work and thinking emerged, and they totally enjoyed this project.



Do you have an activity or technique that works for you? Why not share it with our readers? ESL teachers and tutors are always looking for new ideas and inspiration. We'd love to have your input. Thanks!!



Making appointments

In a telephone conversation with Eileen Marotte, Journey House in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, we got a glimmer of this very clever activity she uses to pair up the students and set up an interview activity. It goes something like this:

The students are each given a daily planner card with several time slots on it. For example, 9:00, 10:00, 11:00, 2:00, etc. After first practicing how to make an appointment with someone, the students mingle and set up appointments with each other, filling out their planning sheet. For example, Student A says "Can I have an appointment to see you this afternoon?" and Student B says "Sure, what time would you like to meet? I am busy at 2:00 but I'm free at 3:00..." They mark this appointment down carefully ("Can you spell your name for me, please?").

When the students all have a full schedule planned, the group is introduced to the next part of the lesson, which is likely to be an interview activity. The students practice a list of interview questions such as ("Where are you from?" "How long have you lived here?") that are appropriate to their level and to the topics they are currently studying. Once they are ready and prepared for the interviews, the teacher calls out, "It's time for your 9:00 appointment!"

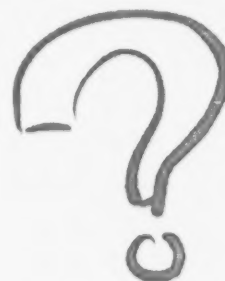
Students search out their partner for that timeslot and conduct their interviews. After a given time period, the teacher calls out, "It's time for your 10:00 appointment!" and the students continue on with the next partner.

Hands-on English says:

We like a lot of things about this technique. For one thing, it places a typical "classroom" activity (i.e., pairing up with another student) into a real-life, adult context. This means that all the classroom activity provides practice in things that the students may likely use outside of the classroom. There is a professional tone to managing the class this way. At the same time though, the friendly rapport that is always generated by such student-to-student activities is still present.

You might expand this idea further—how about a lesson on politely cancelling or

rescheduling an appointment? The teacher could throw a monkey-wrench into the plan by posting a "testing" schedule for some students, requiring everyone to shuffle their appointments around. Any other ideas?



Guessing game: What am I doing?

For beginning students, play a variation of 'charades' with recently learned vocabulary. Write phrases about common actions, each on a separate card. For example: wash the dishes, got to sleep, count some money, do some exercises, wait for the bus, write a letter, read the newspaper, use a computer, drive a car, make a telephone call, drink a glass of water, put on a coat, buy some groceries, open a door, write a check, eat a sandwich, fill your car with gas. You can add any other actions that you have studied in class.

Have each student take a card and pantomime the action; the other students try to guess what he or she is doing. This is fun, fairly low-stress and provides good review.

A slightly more challenging version uses language clues. One student stands so that he or she can't see the board. Another student writes an action on the board, such as "make a telephone call." Now the class tries to give clues so that the student will guess the action. For example, "You do this every day," "You do this when you want to talk with somebody," etc.

If this seems too scary for one student, try dividing the class into two or three groups to play this. ☞

Multi-level dictation: TV-Turnoff Week

How to do it

Prepare photocopies of the three worksheets on the next page. Put each level on a separate sheet, and enlarge the text on your copier so that it is easier for students to write on. Bring plenty of these copies to class, as students may like to try the dictation more than once.

Discuss the issue of TV watching with your students. How do they feel about TV? Then read the following passage to them about TV-Turnoff Week. Once they have understood the story, have them read the text with you, and discuss any new vocabulary. Find out what the students think about the six discussion questions provided.

Once students are very familiar with the text and the topic, you can try the dictation. Have the students choose which level to try. Advanced students can try it on a blank sheet of paper, if they wish. Literacy-level students can succeed at Level A if they can

write numbers. When the dictation is finished, match different level students together to help each other with corrections. (Lower level students will have the information on their sheet that the higher level students need!) Students can choose another level and try again, if you wish.

Follow-up

This topic lends itself very well to interviewing people about their TV habits. Students could make up a list of questions and interview 2 or 3 of their neighbors and colleagues, reporting back to the class with the data.

Another interesting assignment is to choose an agreed-upon time when everyone can watch TV, and have the students record information about the ads during that time. For example, how many ads, how long, what for, rate their appropriateness, etc. These tasks could be divided up so that beginning-level students can contribute as well. ➡

For more information about this event, visit www.tvturnoff.org

You'll find news releases and informational brochures with reports about American TV habits and how this affects us. Some of these short pieces would be interesting reading for high intermediate or advanced level ESL students.

There is also some teaching material available there—this may be aimed more at elementary school teachers, but if your students have school-age children you may still find it useful.

For 7 days in April, many people will turn off their TV. Instead of watching TV, they will do other things. They will read, play games, walk, talk, or do something they enjoy.

Most Americans watch 4 hours of TV every day. Children watch about 1,000 hours of TV per year, but they go to school only 900 hours per year. In one year, people see 20,000 ads on TV. They see 200,000 violent acts. They see 16,000 murders. You can see 200 ads for junk food in one day.

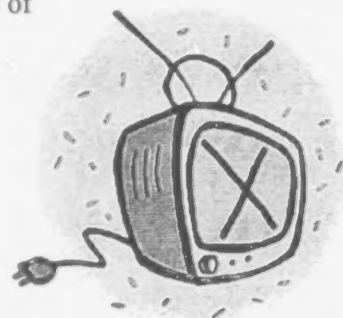
If you want to join 'TV-Turnoff Week,' it's easy. On April 22, don't turn on your TV. Don't watch TV again until after April 28. Millions of people will be doing this. So, turn off your TV and turn on life!

Discussion

1. Why do people like watching TV?
2. What is good about TV? (benefits)
3. What is bad about TV? (dangers)
4. If you don't watch TV, what can you do instead? Make a list.
5. Many teachers, librarians, doctors and parents think 'TV-Turnoff Week' is a good idea. Why do they like this idea?
6. Would it be easy or difficult for you to turn off your TV for one week?

Here is the full text for reading and dictation. It is 14 sentences (126 words).

Vocabulary needed:
turn on, turn off, watch, ads, violent acts, murders, junk food.



TV-Turnoff week (Level A)

For _____ days in April, many people will turn _____ their TV. Instead of watching _____, they will do other things. They will _____, play games, walk, _____, or do something they enjoy.

Most Americans watch _____ hours of TV every _____. Children watch about _____ hours of TV per year, but they go to school only _____ hours per year. In _____ year, people see _____ ads on TV. They see _____ violent acts. They see _____ murders. You can see _____ ads for junk food in _____ day.

If you want to join 'TV-Turnoff Week,' it's easy. On April _____, don't turn _____ your TV. Don't watch _____ again until after April _____. Millions of people will be doing this. So, turn _____ your TV and turn _____ life!

TV-Turnoff week (Level B)

For 7 days _____, many _____ will _____ their _____. Instead of _____, they will do other things. They will _____, _____ games, _____, _____, or do _____ they enjoy.

Most Americans _____ 4 _____ of TV _____. Children _____ about 1,000 _____ per _____, but they _____ only 900 _____ per _____. In one year, _____ 20,000 ads _____. They _____ 200,000 violent acts. _____ 16,000 murders. _____ see _____ ads for junk food _____.

If _____ want to join 'TV-Turnoff Week,' it's easy. _____ 22, don't _____ your TV. _____ TV again until _____ 28. _____ of _____ will be doing this. So, _____ TV and _____ life!

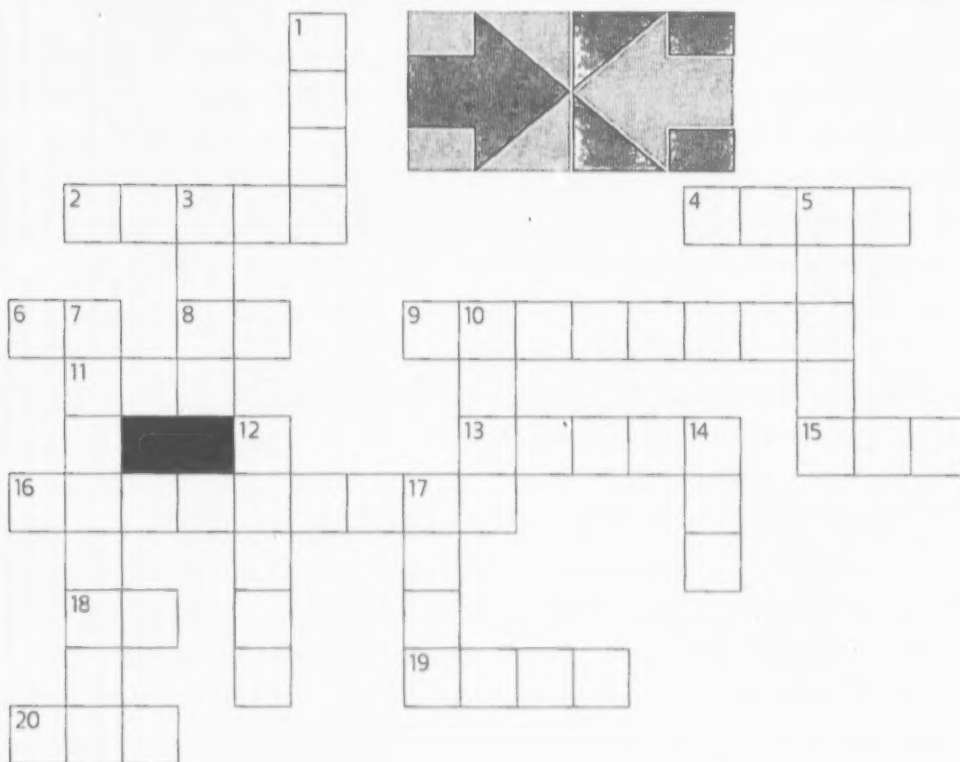
TV-Turnoff week (Level C)

For _____, _____ will turn off _____. Instead of watching TV, _____. They will _____, _____, _____, talk, or _____.

_____ 4 hours _____ TV _____. _____ about 1,000 _____ of TV _____, but _____ 900 _____. In _____, people see 20,000 _____ violent acts. _____ murders. _____ 200 _____ in _____.

_____ 'TV-Turnoff Week,' it's _____. On April 22, _____ Don't watch TV again _____. _____ will be _____ this. So, _____ TV _____ turn on _____!

Crossword puzzle: Opposites



Word list

difficult
east
fast
good
hot
in
left
light
long
north
old
on
positive
remember
right
sweet
top
true
up
yes

Puzzle A

Across clues

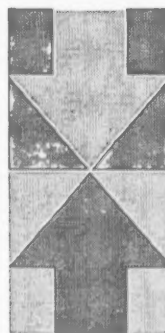
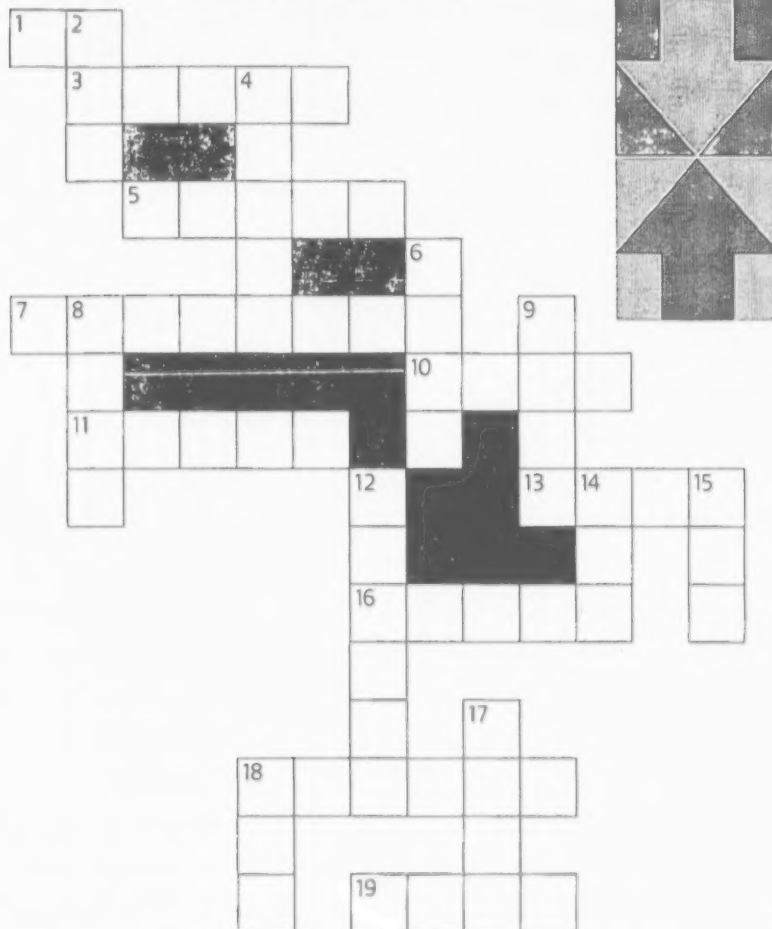
2. In the winter it's dark at 5 p.m., but in the summer it's still _____ at 5 p.m.
4. "Let me tell you what happened to me on Saturday." "Is this a _____ story?" "No, it's very short."
6. "Is this elevator going down?" "No, sorry, it's going _____."
8. "Is the stove still _____?" "No, I turned it off."
9. September 11 is a day we will never forget. Something happened that we will always _____.
11. "Is this your correct address?" "No, that is my _____ address. Let me give you the new one."
13. Lemons are sour and sugar is _____.
15. If you feel cold, drink something _____.
16. Learning English isn't easy for me. It's very _____.
18. That door says "OUT" and this door says _____.
19. Please read these sentences. If you agree with the sentence, write "_____." If you don't agree, write "false."

20. "Can you drive a car?" "_____, I can." "Can you drive a motorcycle?" "No, I can't."

Down clues

1. Please slow down. You are driving too _____!
3. "Is this milk still _____?" "I don't think so. It smells bad to me."
5. In the U.S., usually the weather is colder in the _____ and warmer in the south.
7. You will be happier if you try to think _____ thoughts, not negative ones.
10. Oregon is on the west coast of the U.S.; Florida is on the _____ coast.
12. "Did I spell your name _____?" "No, that's wrong. I'll spell it for you."
14. Please write the date at the _____ of the page, and sign your name at the bottom of the page.
17. Which hand do you write with, the _____ or the right?

Opposites, cont'd...



Word list

bad
bottom
cold
dark
down
easy
false
forget
negative
new
no
off
out
right
short
slow
sour
south
west
wrong

Puzzle B

Across clues

1. Please answer the question, yes or ____.
3. *New York is the capital city of the U.S.* Is this true or ____?
5. "Two plus two equals five, right?" "No, that's ____." The answer is four."
7. Every job has some positive things you like, and some ____ things you don't like.
10. That computer is old and ____; this computer is new and fast.
11. "Is your school on the north side of town?" "No, it's on the ____ side."
13. If you know the answer, put your hand up. If you don't know the answer, keep your hand ____.
16. You can't turn left here because it's a one-way street. You have to turn ____.
18. "Can you tell me where to put these things?" "The videos go on the top shelf, and the books go on the ____ shelf."

Note to instructors:

These two puzzles are at about the same level of difficulty. They each provide practice for the same vocabulary, but from a different point of view, so students will want to do both puzzles.

Tip: You can make a vocabulary matching exercise with the two word lists. Students match the opposites. ✎

Down clues

19. You shouldn't read in the ____, it's bad for your eyes. Please turn on the light!
2. Every morning she turns the computer on. At the end of the day, she turns it ____.
4. I used to have long hair, but I got a haircut last month. Now my hair is ____.
6. "Do you live on the east side of town?" "No, my apartment is on the ____ side."
8. "Is it difficult to find your house?" "No, it's ____ to find. I'll give you the address."
9. Where I live it's hot in the summer and ____ in the winter.
12. "Don't ____ your doctor's appointment!" "Okay, I'll try to remember."
14. The kids like to play ____ side but I like to stay inside.
15. An old car is cheaper than a ____ car.
17. "If this drink tastes too ____ we can add some sugar." "No, that's okay. I don't like sweet drinks."
18. Some TV shows are good for children, and some are ____ for children.

On the market: Where to find ESL books & resources

It's been several years since we printed a list of publishers for you. A recent plea from one reader made us aware that it's time for an update! Here we are providing the web addresses only; to get mailing or phone information please check each website for the most recent information.

ESL distributors:

Both of these companies offer fast service on book orders. They carry a large selection of ESL books and materials from many (though not all) publishers as well as their own publications. Their large catalogs are great to have on your shelf for reference.

- Alta ESL Book Center <www.altaesl.com>

They are located in California; ship anywhere. Their website is easy to use.

- Delta Systems Co., Inc.

<www.delta-systems.com>

They are located in the Chicago area; ship anywhere. Their website is easy to use.

ESL Publishers:

- Abaca Books <www.abacaesl.com/>

A small publisher of ESL books especially useful for beginning level and literacy level students.

- Audio-Forum (Jeffrey Norton Publishers) <www.audioforum.com>

Video and audio cassettes, CDs, bilingual phrasebooks; many would be useful for student self-instruction.

- Cambridge University Press <<http://esl.cup.org/>>

Large publisher of resource books with excellent classroom teaching ideas; teacher education. Good listening texts and much more.

- Excellence in Education, 1-800-852-0969

Small publisher of somewhat old-fashioned texts which would be good for students to work on at home.

- Full Blast Productions

<www.fullblastproductions.com>

Small publisher in Canada; lots of practical materials and copyable resources for basic ESL teaching. Some culture texts.

- Heinle & Heinle Publishers

<www.heinle.com>

They publish a huge list of ESL titles at all levels. Often these aren't available through distributors so you'll want their catalog. Cumbersome website.

- Houghton Mifflin Co.

<www.hmco.com/college/esl>

Mostly for higher level academic students, but *Amazing Stories* series is good for adult ESL. Site is difficult to use.

- Linmore Publishing, Inc.

<www.linmore.com>

A good source for literacy-level texts and student-based stories for easy reading. Very informative website; sample pages provided.

- LVA, Literacy Volunteers of America

<www.literacyvolunteers.org>

They have a selection of student materials and tutor training guides. Easy-to-use website.

- Longman ESL <www.longman-elt.com>

You'll want their ESL catalog—it includes Longman, Addison Wesley, Prentice Hall Regents and Scott Foresman titles. Some of these texts are classics, and the dictionaries are superb.

- McGraw-Hill in Higher Education ESL

<www.mhhe.com/catalogs/hss/esl/>

Look for their "Adult ESL" section.

- McGraw Hill/Contemporary Publishing Co. <www.mhcontemporary.com/products/eslcat.html>

They have useful workplace, citizenship and teacher resource books. Website is frustrating to browse; use it to order a catalog.

- New Readers Press <www.laubach.org>

They publish the *LifePrints* series as well as a good citizenship text for low-literacy ESOL; a collection of useful titles.

- Oxford University Press

<www.oup-usa.org/esl>

Large publisher with a wide range of titles. Their picture dictionaries are essential; literacy materials are good. Excellent teacher resources. Website is easy to use.



- Pro Lingua Associates
<www.ProLinguaAssociates.com>

Small publisher of activity books and practical materials. You'll want to get on their mailing list. Lovely, easy-to-use website with interesting content.

- Steck-Vaughn (a division of Harcourt Brace & Co.) <www.steck-vaughn.com>
(Look for their "Adult Education" section, then select "ESL"). They publish *English ASAP*, a well-designed workplace series, and citizenship materials.

- TESOL, Inc. <www.tesol.org>
This is the professional organization of ESL teachers worldwide. Their publication list includes career resources, information about the profession and activities books.

- University of Michigan Press
<www.press.umich.edu/esl>
Many of their books are for higher levels, but some titles are wonderful for adult ESL, including *A to Zany*, a community-based activity book.

Free or low cost ESL/Literacy resources:

- ELT, English Language Training (at the Spring Institute for International Studies) <www.springinstitute.com/elt>

ELT serves refugees and provides technical assistance to refugee programs. Their website has some very good articles, teaching tips and SCANS lessons you can download for free.

- VAEL, Virginia Adult Ed and Lit Center
<www.vcu.edu/aclweb/online_publications_tt.html>

They have published an excellent resource useful for anyone starting an ESL program called the *ESL Starter Kit*. Download it here for free.

- NCLE/CAL <www.cal.org/ncl>

This is an information agency with lots of useful free resources. It's the best place to go to find a starting point on any adult ESOL teaching issue. Their page of links, called "Worth a Visit" is a gem.

- TOPICS Magazine, <www.rice.edu/projects/topics/Electronic/Magazine.html>

This website can't be beat as a source for student-written material on every

conceivable topic. Useful for reading, writing and discussion material.

- LINCS <www.nifl.gov/lincs>

This is the hub for all information on every aspect of adult literacy, including ESL. From here you can find "Collections" of interesting websites with classroom ideas, browse articles and find links to state and regional contact information. Be sure to have plenty of time (and patience) available when you browse here.

Not specifically for ESL, but useful:

- Glencoe (a division of McGraw Hill)
<www.glencoe.com>

They are not an ESL publisher, but they have workplace, vocational and civics texts for adult students, some of which could be useful for ESL.

- Globe Fearon (div. of Pearson Ed.)
<www.globefearon.com>

Not an ESL publisher, but they have ABE materials, with some especially good stuff on health and consumer topics.

- J. Weston Walch Publisher
<www.walch.com>

See the "Living Skills" section on their website. They are not an ESL publisher, but have practical lifeskills texts that might be very interesting to ESL students.

Oh no, it's out of print!

If you are looking for a book that is no longer published, obviously the first place to look is in an ESL resource library if you can find one in your area. Next, try your public library's interlibrary loan service. We have sometimes had good luck ordering out-of-print books (used) from Amazon.com online, although it can take several weeks to get your copy. Finally, we've heard that you can shop for used books on eBay, but haven't tried this yet ourselves. 🐘



Dear Abbie:

How to teach maps & directions

A reader asks:

"How can I help my students learn about maps and directions?"

Abbie responds:

My first thought is: Stick close to home! There are many textbooks with map activities using imaginary places, but your students want to know about their own community. So first get some maps of your city or town. Check with the Chamber of Commerce or visitors' center. Telephone books often have maps. You may not need a map of the entire city, but just of the area where your students live and work. If the map is small, enlarge it and make copies.

I usually have one map for each pair of students and collect them after we use them. If you plan to keep the maps and reuse them, you might laminate them. Then students can follow a route with a marker and erase it afterwards. For new readers you might consider making a simplified map. Students can also make their own maps of the building or neighborhood where their classes meet.

A bit farther afield, but still "real," state maps are usually available free from state tourist offices. Calling and requesting maps is good telephone practice for students. Students can find distances between cities and plan weekend trips. Large world and US maps are for sale at business stores. Note that many world maps are "Ameri-centric," that is the Americas are in the middle and Asia is divided. This can be confusing to students.

Maps on call

Don't limit map lessons to one unit. Keep maps handy. I keep world, US, state and local maps available all the time. If we happen to read a story about a person who lives in Chicago, we can look for it. If students are talking together about the location of their countries, they can use the world map to show where they are. That is especially important because the names of countries and cities may be pronounced differently in various languages. As a first day activity I often have the students teach

their classmates how to pronounce their names and show them where they are from on a map. When students tell about their weekend activities, we can find any locations they might have visited on local or state maps. They can also trace bus routes as well as locating emergency rooms and public libraries. They can give directions to their houses as other students follow along on the map.

Example lessons

Now to get to specific lessons. I like to start with basic vocabulary. Draw a simple map on the board (it can be of an imaginary or real place) with two or three streets, some labeled buildings (drug store, men's clothing, etc.), a parking lot and a simple compass showing north, south, east and west. Then introduce the following vocabulary by numbering appropriate places (or drawing arrows) on the map: go straight, turn right, turn left, the corner of ___ and ___, next to/ beside, between, across from, and in front of. Ask students questions: What is between the gift shop and the drugstore? What is behind the

supermarket? Then describe locations as the students guess: i.e., It's between the library and the parking lot—what is it? Students can then make up their own descriptions to challenge their classmates. Also look at map conventions about east, west, etc. Students can use this model to go out and make their own maps of their neighborhoods or the school neighborhood.

Hit the streets

Next I post several sheets containing short written directions for places near the classroom:

"Go east on Franklin Street when you leave the church. Continue on Franklin Street to Estes. Turn right on Estes. After one and a half blocks, turn left. Where are you?" The students select one of these and go on a hunt to identify the place. Or, if your class meets in a shopping area, pairs of students can be sent out to follow directions to a particular store.

—by Abbie Tom, ESL teacher in Durham, North Carolina.

As you may know if you've been reading *Hands-on English* for a while, Abbie has written a number of articles for us with good, useful advice for beginning teachers. She is a veteran teacher who has published a number of books and has given teacher training workshops. This article launches our new column, "Dear Abbie," in which we are pleased to get her teaching advice in response to your questions.

Do you have a question for Abbie? Please let us know at *Hands-on English* and we will pass these along to her. Thank you!



After they have practiced following written directions, I give directions orally. This is much harder. Students follow along on maps of the town. Oral directions can also be used as dictation practice. Only after considerable practice with this do they give their own directions while a partner follows along on a map.

Cultural tip

I think it's useful for students to learn certain conventions of the town where they are living. For example where does the numbering system start? Which direction does it go? For example, as you go north from the center of town, numbers get bigger. In American cities, odd numbers are usually across the street from even ones.

An activity for intermediate to advanced students: Ask students to think of their favorite place in the community. Then have them give directions to it as their classmates follow on a map. Then ask them to share why this is their favorite place. In a large

class, students can do this in groups rather than in the whole class.

Make your own map exercise

To make an 'information gap' exercise for students to work on in pairs, I took a computer map of the U.S. with some cities marked on it. Working with two copies, I erased the names of some cities on each, so that students would need to ask their partners for the missing cities, using the directions vocabulary they had learned. You could make an exercise like this from any kind of map.

Other resources

Most basic textbook series, such as *Crossroads*, *Shortcuts* or *LifePrints* have map exercises. In addition, many books with communicative or listening activities also have map work. These might be easier to use because the teacher doesn't have to make up the exercises, but at the same time they are less relevant to students than home-made activities. ➤

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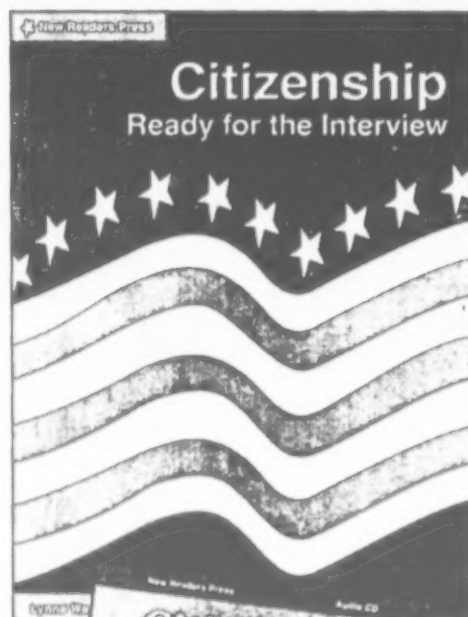
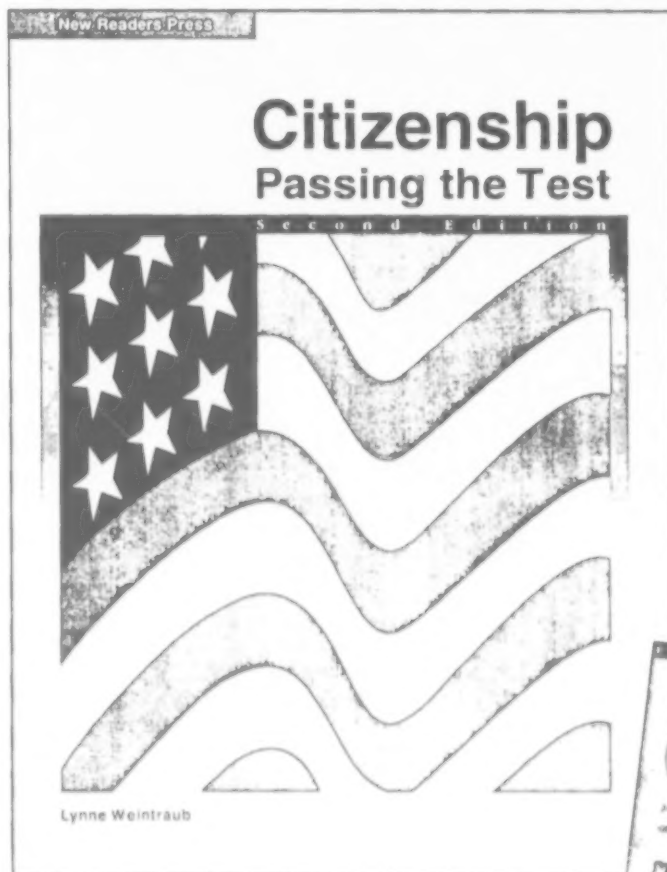
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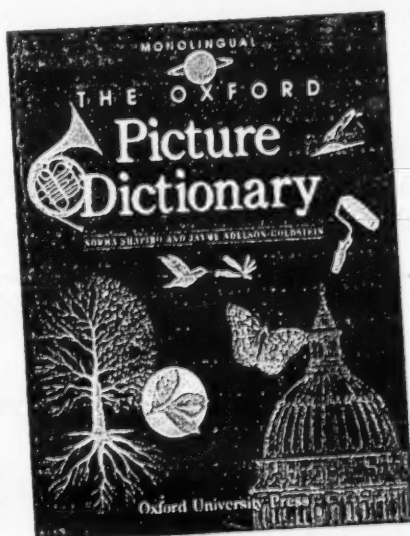
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News & notes

In past issues

It's almost **tax time**—if your students are interested in learning about this topic see Vol. 10, No. 6. There you'll find a puzzle and scrambled sentence activity about filling out your taxes, and a multi-level dictation on tax procrastinating (an American tradition).

Spring will soon be springing, and you will find a multi-level crossword on events of **Spring** in Vol. 11, No. 1. Another perennial event, **Spring cleaning** is covered in Vol. 9, No. 6.

For a listening activity about all the **Seasons**, see Vol. 10, No. 3. This activity can be adapted to any level and expanded with your own examples.

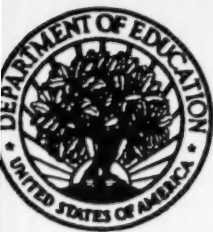
Does anyone have ideas for teaching about Arbor Day or Earth Day? In Vol. 11, No. 1 we offered a lesson about **Endangered species**. We would love to hear from readers with other ideas on environmental issues. Thank you! ➡

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